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1931

PASSING PROTESTANTISM

AND

COMING CATHOLICISM

PASSING PROTESTANTISM

AND

COMING CATHOLICISM

BY

NEWMAN SMYTH

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1908

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PASSING PROTESTANTISM AND COMING CATHOLICISM

I

PASSING PROTESTANTISM

THE world challenges to-day the hope of Christianity. What is its promise for human life? The question of the scholar may be, What is Christianity? The faith of the people will depend more upon the answer to the question, What can Christianity now do in the world? History, now making before our eyes, has the fascination of swift movement and unknown possibilities. The news of the day may open vast and untraversed social and international problems. Within our churches the thought, often anxious for the morrow, is present—What shall be the religious life of the people?

Throughout the following inquiry we shall

seek to throw a searchlight in one direction only; we shall ask what the prospect seems to be for a reunited Christianity, by which a greater work of faith may be wrought than the world has ever known. It is beyond the scope of this essay to inquire concerning the possibility of a reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches; the signs of that lie as yet beneath our horizon. But all over our Western Christianity there is promise of a dawning day. We shall ask whether with good reason we may discern any signs of our times that the age of Protestantism is passing, and the age of a new Catholicism is coming. We shall acquaint ourselves with Modernism in the Roman Church, which may prove to be a mediating way between the two. We shall then understand better with what reasonable hope we may expect to see again the one "Holy Church throughout all the world," which the first Christian confessors saw, and which Protestantism has lost awhile.

We have no historical justification for re-

garding these ages of Protestantism as necessarily a final period of Christianity. Our time may prove to be a transitional era, as other periods of Christianity have been before it. No mistake is easier or more fatuous than for those who happen to be living at any hour of history to imagine that the world has come to a full period in their institutions; as, to take but a single instance, it would have been folly if the feudal barons had supposed that their social system was a finality. Indeed, Protestantism in its religious economy bears a striking resemblance to feudalism. Its ecclesiastical confessions remind us of the feudal castles on the Rhine; they are like so many strongly built fortifications, guarded with moat and tower, and many an angle and loop-hole for shafts of defence in the assaults of theological controversy, provided sometimes with dungeons also for heretics. Each ecclesiastical castle likewise has its surrounding vineyards, and its devoted serfdom over whom it extends its protecting power. But now the castles

by the Rhine are in ruins, or at best have been restored into peaceable modern habitations, while by them all the Rhine, as of old, flows on and on. The religious feudalism of armed separations, frequent strifes, and close, fortified ecclesiasticisms, like the economic feudalism, has proved to be by no means a Christian finality.

Already Protestantism is well advanced in a third period of its lifetime. For, so far from its being true that it represents a permanent form of Christian life, it is significant that it has already passed through two periods of growth and activity, which may be compared to the time of early manhood and of middle age. The first of these periods, which are already completed in the history of Protestantism, may be distinguished as the epoch of its protest against the one church then dominating the world —the time long since accomplished of the warfare of Luther and the reformers against the crushing supremacy of Rome. All the conflicts of religious liberty—how the

reformers warred and how they reigned, and what they did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of our Israel! But Luther's battle hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God," has long since become in our congregations a song of victorious faith, and no more a battle call. We sing it believingly, triumphantly, very much as we might use Deborah's Commemoration Ode in the Old Testament.

The second age of Protestantism was an era of systematic construction. The Reformation was more than a protest. Martin Luther's brave act in nailing his theses on the door of the church at Wittenberg was not all of Martin Luther. Behind the deed was the man; and the spiritual personality of the man became the power of another world-age. In his great history of Protestant theology, Professor Dorner has put in the foreground the positive principle of the Reformation, which was embodied in Luther's personality, "the potentialized self of an age"; it gave to Protestantism a vitality

and a history such as no mere protest could have achieved. From its beginning the new creative spirit of the Reformation was evident; for a considerable period later it manifested itself in the construction of new churches and the formation of distinctive creeds. By the end of the seventeenth century these were in the main completed. Then the thought of the Reformation having moved into them, for the next hundred years and more it lived in them, defended them, as men will their homes; and it was content with occasionally repairing and refurnishing them, but without desire to tear them down and build new ones. During this period of Protestantism the foundations of our larger denominations were laid, and our chief ecclesiastical enclosures built up. We must turn back to those earlier theological controversies and the definitions of doctrines then current, if we would understand the language of the Protestant creeds which are still retained in many evangelical churches, or if we would comprehend the sub-con-

scious ideas which still rule, as ancestral influences, the minds of many orthodox congregations.

It is not indeed true that within these confessions thought has remained imprisoned; the strictest Protestant creeds have in them open windows, and the law of liberty is recognized among them all. Nor is the question here in point, how far these doctrinal statements may be susceptible of modification or interpretation, so that they may still be kept and used, as old houses may be happily occupied when fitted up with modern improvements. The single fact which lies in the present line of our historical logic is, that the character of creed-building and church-making marks distinctively an age of Protestantism which belongs to its past. Some new sects, it is true, have been born in these last days, and others may come to untimely birth; but it is here to our purpose to note that the lines of chief division through the Protestant world were run long ago; that for two hun-

dred years Protestantism has not been much occupied in making new denominations or in devising new formulas of faith. On the other hand, it has of late years been breaking up rather than making creeds. We may therefore justly reason that a movement of religious thought and life, which has already passed through two marked stages of development—the epoch of protest and the era of reconstruction—is a providential preparation for something beyond itself; as our civil war, and the subsequent period of reconstruction, have proved to be only an epoch of transition into a greater nationality. There lies before us in its vaster possibility another Christian age to come. Already we are facing its problems. Shall the Protestant era—its religious warfare accomplished, and its confused years of reconstruction drawing happily to a close—issue in a grander Catholicism? The answer of faith is—the greater Christianity is already at the door.

A first reason for this hope is that in our

times there are to be discerned signs of the passing of the Protestant age of history. These are to be seen alike in the success and in the failure of Protestantism.

It were an easy and grateful task to depict the splendid successes of Protestantism. Our free churches have their glory in them. They are the pride of our New England inheritance. They are the ancestral virtues upon which our homes are built. They are the constitutional foundations of our American citizenship. They constitute the historic security of democracy throughout the world. They have opened the door wide for all the sciences to come into our modern civilization; and they have made thought as free as the angel whom the early Christian prophet saw flying through mid-heaven with an everlasting evangel. Protestantism has its triumphal arch, and upon it are depicted the victories of hard-fought fields, and the procession of the mighty oppressors of the nations, led captive by it; and the names of the heroes of its

faith remain inscribed in perpetual honor upon it. But it is a completed arch. Its crowning achievement is the victory which it has won forever for the spiritual liberty of the individual man. Henceforth the right of private judgment for every man can never be abolished or destroyed. This keystone has been placed secure for all time in the triumphal arch of Protestantism, and no powers of darkness shall remove it from its place. In the main the distinctive work of Protestants as Protestants has been done. Hereafter there may remain the lesser and decreasing labor of extending civil liberty to remoter regions, or in Christian lands of adding here and there some finishing touches to the Reformation's historic masterpiece of the Emancipation of the Spiritual Man. Henceforth the truth is free which makes us free.

In this fulfilment of its providential mission lies the sign of the passing of the Protestant age. For a work achieved is always the sign of another and a greater work to be

accomplished. When one success has been won, a new task invites the spirit that is in man. This is so both in the individual life and in the course of history. Successes of men and of ideas are never ends, but means to further ends. They are not epitaphs, but invitations. They are not dead memories, but living inspirations. This law of progress holds true of the Divine revelation itself, the record of which is preserved in the world's Bible. The law came by Moses; but the age in which the law was given, rendered necessary the age of the prophets. Not to destroy but to fulfil—the ever larger fulfilment of the law and the prophets—is the historic work, still in process of accomplishment, of the Son of man who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"; it is the unceasing work of Him who sitteth on the throne who said, "Behold I make all things new." This is historically true; in the great tidal movements of human life no wave can remain too long uplifted at its height; one after another the great waves

break upon the shores, and God's tide comes flowing in.

We pass then from this assurance that Protestantism has, on the whole, attained the end for which it was sent, to consider what further it is obviously failing to accomplish. For in what a movement fails to do may be given the sign of another service for a new age to fulfil. It is no dirge that we shall have to sing. They are the pessimists who do not see the incompleteness of the forerunner's work, and whose eyes are holden so that they cannot perceive the presence of One greater than he, for whose coming the best past has been preparation. If we point without hesitation to the darkest clouds of the present hour, it is because we see also across them the sweep and the radiance of the bow of promise.

We are not to be understood as asserting a complete inability of Protestantism even where its ineffectualness is most obvious. We are not oblivious of its splendid outspokenness against all unrighteousness. We

can see some Christian man or woman pursuing every evil thing under the sun. The missionary spirit is superb; but its means are belittling. The failures of Protestantism are partial; but they are obvious. They may be summed up in a word when we ask, to what extent are the Protestant churches losing control of the forces of life?

Human affairs in the last analysis are problems of forces. Institutions, laws, economics, social conditions, constitute a problem of forces; history is a dynamic, and the study of history, as truly as of physics or biology, is a study of energy. Hence there can be no profound insight into human life, and still less a prophetic discernment of the better conditions that may be obtained, unless one feels the forces which are working beneath and all through the world in which men live and act. We bring our Protestantism, therefore, to a real test and a decisive judgment, if we search it through and through with this question, Is it mastering the controlling forces of life?

Before the Reformation a dominating factor was the authority of the Roman Church. Upon the whole mediæval world was set the stamp of the Papacy. Moreover, the authority of the Papacy was an effective authority. It worked. It maintained undisputed control over whole spheres of human life.

This kind of authority has long since been discarded among us; but has Protestantism gained authority of its own? Or by virtue of any power inherent in it, is it keeping a supreme religious control of the modern nations which it has created and made free? Is religion the master-passion of Protestant communities? For Christianity must become the mastery of human life, or it is not the final religion. If our existing forms of religion are losing such control, we must look for another coming of the Son of man as one having authority.

Now it is just this loss of religious authority which the churches of the Reformation must confess. At this point we are not dealing

with causes, but facing facts. We have to do with actual human conditions. Exceptions there may be in many places; and compensations also for apparent loss. But putting these for the moment one side, and looking broadly at the facts of life, we must admit the relaxation of authority in our Protestant churches.

Religion among us has lost authority in the family life. The contrast is a marked one between the hold which Rome keeps even to this day upon the family, and the weakening of religious restraints among the children of Protestants. Admitting that Rome may be losing adherents in its own territory, the fact immediately in point is that, wherever Romanism is acknowledged, it speaks with authority to the whole family. From the cradle to the grave, from baptism to the last unction, it consecrates and it makes its own the life of man. It confesses, it marries, and it refuses to divorce; it commands, it warns, it blesses; and it sends, supported by its staff, into the next

world the faithful over whom it always watches. So true is this, that even its children who may depart for years from its altars and throw off its yoke, in frequent instances, when they are about to die, return to their baptismal vows and send in the last hours for the priests whom they have forsaken. Protestantism has too seldom such inherent and inherited authority among its own free families. We baptize; we teach in our Sunday schools for a little while; we marry and we divorce; we keep some men in our places of worship, we lose others from our own household; rarely do we bring back those who have gone from us; and, instead of a sustaining sacrament for the hour of death, too often the reasonable hope of immortality withdraws itself in the last darkness from the hearts of many over whom we have not always watched.

If one should question this fact of the diminishing control of the churches over the family life, an evidence of it, sufficiently suggestive, may be found by observing the

recurrence of the same family names, generation after generation, in the early records of the Puritan churches, and comparing with it the absences and the gaps in the family names in our recent church registers. It is not merely that our families are smaller, or our children more scattered; it is not so usual in these days for whole families to belong to the church.

Coincident with this loosening of the bonds of religion in the family is the further fact that Protestant churches are not maintaining their influence over considerable areas of thought. It is not simply that worldliness and unbelief are coming in; but much religion is withdrawing from the churches. In almost any community there may be found considerable numbers of people who are not in their habits of mind irreligious, nor without faith in their hearts. But they belong to no church, confess no creed, and rarely attend any public worship. They may seek after new cults, or remain content with feeling themselves to be religious in general with

no beliefs in particular. There is a kind of religious literature not generally known among our church membership, seldom recognized by theologians, but to be found in the bookstores, and having large sales among such persons outside our communions—a literature which is somewhat mystical, quietistic and spiritual, but neither churchly nor very distinctively Christian. The growth and spread of this kind of literature outside the domain of the Church is a noteworthy phenomenon. The older mysticism, the former quietism, flourished within the Church. Now it springs up largely outside the churches, and beyond their creeds.

The existence of large spaces of religious nebulousness without fixed points of luminous faiths, may find a partial explanation in still another characteristic of these latter days of the Reformation. I refer to the lack of religious education. At this very point where our fathers were firmly entrenched, their descendants have been driven back with broken ranks. We are not giving in

this country a good common-school religious education to the people. One may recognize hopefully many recent efforts to repair this disaster; but the fact of it must be admitted. Once the language of theology was not an unknown tongue in New England homes. Words had not become obsolete

> "That have drawn transcendent meanings up
> From the best passion of all bygone time."

The highest themes of religious thought had not taken refuge from the world in the studies of Christian specialists. It matters not whether the fault lies with a general intellectual negligence, or in an absorbing interest of mind in other pursuits. It is not enough to lament that the art of religious thinking in pulpits or pews is becoming one of the lost arts. Christianity cannot evade its own intellectual responsibility; it has no moral right to leave the minds of men adrift between its creeds, or too far at sea beyond its concern. An intellectual revival is one of the needs of the times.

Wherever the fault may lie, it is a loss if the points of contact are broken between the current of thought in the Church and the general mental activity of the day. The fact is apparent that the thoughts of many at the present time are not to be found within the field even of the teaching of the churches. They do not read the religious literature which might find them. The serious questionings of many young men and women are not brought to any intellectual confessional within the Church. The resultant condition is much in evidence wherever educated young men are gathered. They have, no doubt, some religion, probably more than they may know. But they are not frequenters of the churches; and their doubts are their creeds.

There are not a few who are religiously very much in the position in which a traveller is said once to have been left when he reached Constantinople. Upon the arrival of his vessel, he was put into a boat and sent ashore. But the Turkish officials at the landing found something wrong with his

papers, and sent him back to the ship. The officers of the ship refused to receive him because he had no papers authorizing him to embark. And so the story left him passing to and fro between the ship and the shore, with no power to rest either on the land or sea. Such is the religious state of many minds. Protestantism does not attract them, and Rome repels them. They have not the credentials of belief upon which they may gain admission to Evangelical churches, and, having disembarked from the faith which once held them, no alien religion waits to receive them. So our Christianity seems to leave them adrift in uncertainty, and the night comes on.

Besides all this, to run rapidly through the enumeration of the failures of our Christianity, nothing by general consent is to be deemed more fatal to religious efficiency everywhere than the loss of the unity of the Church. We might here take to ourselves the Pope's phrase, and say of our destruction of the oneness of the Church, that it is "the

synthesis of all heresies." At least it is the summation of the losses of Protestantism.

In the second century the first great achievement of Christianity was the upbuilding of the Holy Catholic Church, belief in which we confess to this day in the Apostles' Creed. That work was not completed in a day. The passing centuries added to it their memorial stones. Superstitions, it is true, entered through its gates, to mingle with its worship, and to confuse the simplicity of its faith. But from the midst of those early ages the one Church stands out as concretely, visibly, grandly, as a cathedral above the city's toiling streets:

> "Looking up suddenly, I found mine eyes
> Confronted with the minster's vast repose.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> *Be reverent, ye who flit and are forgot*
> *Of faith so nobly realized as this.*"

The Reformation destroyed the visible unity of the Western Church. Erasmus wrote in 1521: "Luther has made a prodigious stir. . . . There is some slight hope

from Pope Leo; but if the enemies of light are to have their way, we may write on the tomb of a ruined world, 'Christ did not rise again.'"

It was not the tomb of Christianity that was left; but the Reformation was the tomb of the Roman embodiment of Church unity.

It would be but an academic task to wonder whether the new learning of that day might not in time have produced a sufficient reform within the Roman Church, had not the sudden lightning bolt of Luther's Reformation rent it in two. Our question is not what shattering convulsion was inevitable in the sixteenth century; the providential question which we have now to face is: By what necessity are we bound to regard this age of a divided Christianity as a last age either for Protestantism or for Roman Catholicism? Shall the Spirit of Unity find a worthier embodiment?

The ruins of a former Universal Church are not to be viewed as one might the failure of some social ideal to realize itself, as Plato's

republic remained an unsubstantial ideal of ancient philosophy. What we have to contemplate is the disappearance of a Church unity which once had taken form and become visible on the earth. And if withal the spirit of it should vanish, that would be irreparable loss. But just this is the religious peril of our divisions; the ideal of the one Church wanders among us, like an unembodied spirit, from church to church, until we almost cease really to believe in it. The ideal is put far from us as a millennial dream; it fades from our ordinary religious thought as a momentary glory passes from the evening sky. The all too common unbelief in this supreme ideal is witnessed by the complaisance with which even broad-minded men in all the churches are contented to welcome lower and beggarly substitutes for it. The ideal of one organic Church gone out from the firmament of their faith, they will follow some flickering expedients of fraternal conventions, or courtesies of limited exchange of ministerial functions, and

friendly greetings on neutral platforms, and other such manifestations of mutual respect and occasional charity. Such approaches of religious bodies are indeed to be welcomed, as flags of truce may be between long hostile forces; but this is not the marching on as one triumphal host of Love for the overcoming of the world. The recovery of the ideal, the shining of it as a great light into the eyes of all the churches, even though it be blinding as the vision of the ascended Lord who had been crucified, is our Protestant need, if we are to have in this century a gospel for all men, as Paul had for the Gentiles.

With the decay of the ideal of the one Church, paralysis also falls upon its working unity. This is the now evident consequence of a divided Christianity—it is a weak Christianity. It is ineffectual for the work to which it is sent among men to-day.

A further inefficiency, which we note in passing, results from the lack of unity within each single denomination. In different de-

grees an uneconomic competition occurs within every denomination. Biologists have learned to recognize the "struggle between the parts" of an organism; but nature in her processes of growth sees to it that the organism as a whole shall control for its vital increase the competition of the cells among themselves for existence. It is not so with our churches. Within the limits of the same denomination, in the narrow space of a single community, the competition between churches of the same name goes destructively on, and with little or no organic control for the welfare of the denomination to which they belong. Such crowding and struggling between churches of the same name resembles the fatal proliferation of cells in a diseased tissue; it is not the harmonized and healthful development of an organic whole. But this is a spectacle upon which the early Christians never looked. It was not to be seen in any city or town when the faith and love of those first called Christians spread with amazing rapidity through-

out the Roman Empire. Wasteful competitions within the same denomination in the same locality indicate a degenerative process, which Christianity must overcome at the cost of much sacrifice, and, if need be, of some heroic surgery.

The missionary obligation of the gospel presses home the immediate duty of a recovery of the lost unity of the Church. The distinction between Home and Foreign missions is rapidly disappearing; it is neither with the one nor the other that in any place or land the Church has exclusively to do. It is International Christianity with which anywhere and everywhere the Church of God has to do. But international missionary work has weak support when dependent on separate denominational threads. Once the Roman Church was as a strong cable, one end of which was fastened firmly to the whole mechanism of human society. It controlled the world, and moved it whither it would. In Protestantism it has frayed out into so many separate strands. No

single thread of it is strong enough to move the whole social mechanism; it is like so many ravellings; at most one strand may move a few wheels.

It will be replied with truth that the failures upon which we have been dwelling are by no means exclusive failures of Protestant churches; that similar losses are apparent in Roman Catholic lands. The modernists within the Roman Church themselves bear witness to this; they urge the decay of faith, the rise of socialism, the forsaking of the churches by multitudes of the people, as reasons for their appeal to the Pope for reform and liberty, for the reconciliation of the Church with modern thought. This fact, however, lies in the same line as our reasoning. It parallels our argument. It calls for a reconsideration on all sides of the question of the hour: What inevitable necessity is there for the continuance of a divided Christianity? How long before a new Catholicism shall come to the hour of its nativity? Our part as Protestants is first

with the confession of our own failures. It is full time for us to take to heart, and with more denominational sincerity and churchly humility than has ever been done, the sin, not of original schism, but of continued schism. Are we to-day justly chargeable with that?

As children of the Puritans, many of us, heirs of the liberty which they have won for us, we do not admit that there was the sin of schism in their enforced separation from the national Church of England. The sin of divorce does not consist in the divorce itself, but it is to be sought in the cause of it. A divorce in the household of religion is wrong, if the reasons for it are wrong; if it arises from tempers which should have been controlled, or differences which might mutually have been adjusted; or from passions which are sinful. It is justifiable only when the sanctity of the marriage bond has itself first been violated; when the wrong entering in has struck with fatal lust at the love in which the home is constituted. This is the New

Testament law of divorce. And it holds with an equal validity in the Church of God.

Protestantism justifies itself historically on this ground, that the schism was not of its own choice or making; that its separation was a compulsory disunion; that the cause of it was the violation of the faith and love in which alone the Church can continue to live with fidelity and truth; that continuance in the then existing bonds of the Papacy would have involved surrender of the sanctities of religious life, and the engendering of a succession of evils that ought not to be brought to the birth. The Protestant separation was necessary because of what the Reformers regarded as the adulteries of the Roman Babylon. This claim of lawful separation Protestantism reaffirms and justifies by the record of the wrongs which its revolt has removed from the earth, and the blessings which its warfare has brought to the modern nations. It is, however, another and an altogether different question whether a present schism may not be wrong although a

past schism may have been right. It is an open question how long a schism can be continued without unreason and sin. And it is even a more searching question whether a separation which formerly was necessary may not have left together with its unquestioned blessings an inherited temper of schism, which, lurking in the blood, lingering too long in the habits, betraying itself in the pride of a church, remains as a menace to the religous hope of the world.

Hence it has come to pass that the Protestantism of to-day is met by a call to confess its sin against the unity of Christ's Church. A clear recognition on the part of all non-Roman churches of their part and share in this evil is the first condition of effectual repentance of it. If, as on our part we must continue to maintain, an absolute Papacy, subversive of the historic Episcopate, as it has been destructive of the original democracy of the Church, is a sin against the Holy Spirit of liberty, equally and by the same sign, an absolute independency is a

sin against the Holy Spirit of communion. Both are a sin against the Holy Spirit of education. Persistence in either without repentance, and at the sacrifice of the very life of the Christ among men, might prove to be the modern sin without forgiveness against the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, we cannot fail to notice the escape of social and political factors from the direct influence of the churches as churches. The question must be raised, Is our Christianity organized for moral leadership in all the affairs of business and civic life? Never, indeed, were Christian philanthropies so abounding. And a revival of social and civic righteousness among us is already come. Nevertheless, the love of the Son of man waits for some nobler revealing of its presence. Its sufficient ethics and its simple fraternity are not known with power among all men. Political reform is not to be wrought by religious preaching at long-distance telephone from the places where things are done. A Christianity loaded with blank

moral cartridges is impotent to subdue the mob of social passions. A world of titanic industrial forces is not to be ruled by a Christianity divided in its own house against itself. A populace vehement for social justice, and weary of charity, imagines it sees in the Churches a religion that has come down from the cross to save itself, and hence is powerless to save others. Democracy is confronted by a double peril; it must overcome, or be itself overcome by, the power of lawlessness and the lawlessness of power. Facing the plain facts of life, in view of the awful urgency of many conditions of modern civilization, can we hide from ourselves the conclusion that a Church, disorganized and without unity of effort, waging a brave guerrilla warfare, but with no grand strategy, cannot be expected to overcome all unrighteousness, or to bring in the peace of God's love among all classes and conditions of men?

What, then, is the sign written large across these failures of the Protestant ages? Should

it be answered, these disappointments of our separate Christian efforts signify nothing larger to be hoped for, such answer would be denial of the mastery of Christ himself over the forces of the world. For believers not to look for something further, would be to assume the attitude from which proceeded Peter's denial. We read that before the morning was come, when Jesus was judged in the house of Caiaphas, Peter sat with the officers to see the end. He thought that the end was come. He knew not that the end of man's way was a new beginning of God's way. He thought that all was over, and said, "I know not the man." But the dawn was already in the sky, and the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Our temptation does not overtake us because we must see the end of an eventful hour; it will befall us if we sit down to see the end. It is the temptation of discouragement without vision; base denial might follow if we should only say, Protestantism is passing, and should not be quick to add, Catholicism is coming.

Least of all should a paralysis of prophecy fall upon the heirs of the Reformation, whose fathers looked for a better country, and for whom hope is a birth-right, and progress a destiny. In one of the earlier days of our colonial history, when an end seemed to some of our forefathers about to come to their limited plan of government, some of them feared that the interest of Christ was miserably lost; but a greater-hearted son of the Reformation spoke out in a truer prophecy these words: "Our answer should be of faith and not of fear." Such may well be the answer of all Protestant churches to the present call of the times for a Catholic Christianity.

The Church has never the right to lose the spirit of prophecy. To keep it, and humbly to exercise it, is a first condition of progress. Often indeed we may find ourselves mistaken in our programme of events; our predictions may be quickly brushed aside; the forces making history are indeed vaster than man's comprehension; but the spiritual gift of see-

ing visions and dreaming dreams is a charism perpetually bestowed upon the whole body of believers; and for the Christian Church as a whole to lose it, would be to lose touch with the work of the Spirit of Christ in the world. The Church militant is also the Church expectant; it must be the Church expectant, if it is to become more and more the Church triumphant. A religious pessimist may possibly retain his place in the Church militant; but our fellowship with the Apostles must be in the Church expectant.

While following through this essay one line of this Christian expectation, we do not forget, although we may pass by without notice, other hopeful approaches toward the prospect of a larger Christianity, all of them converging in the promise of another of the days of the Son of man.

"I see," said the Bampton lecturer recently, in the pulpit of St. Mary's, at Oxford, "the rise of a new religious order, the greatest that the world has known, drawn from

all nations and all classes, and, what seems stranger yet, from all churches."[1] Is that true?

Were this merely an individual utterance, it might not lead a sober-minded reader to pause even in the reading. If only a solitary observer should turn prophet and say, "The dawn cometh," the voice might not disturb the slumberous ease of a comfortably housed faith. But this word is not a single utterance, and, though it be from out the dark, such voices are now calling to one another from all sides.

There is no surer mark of a prophetic truth than this, that it seems to rise of itself above the horizon, and is found shining in all men's eyes. An idea springs up spontaneously in the mind of the Church; it comes not with the authority of any one name, it is not heard as the watchword of a single party; it bears not the mark of any class or sect; it is present in the world as

[1] Peile, *The Reproach of the Gospel.* Bampton Lectures, 1907, p. 198.

Melchizedek was of old, without father, without mother, known by its own authority, bringing its own blessing. That this is a natural authentication of a new revealing of God's purpose will not be doubted by those at least who believe in the immanence of the Spirit of Christ in the life of humanity. It is this which we should expect to see, generation after generation, and in our own no less than in other times—this shining through history of the true Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world.

We ask, therefore, whether the Oxford preacher's hope has in it such authentication. Is the thought of some new, more universal order of Christianity coming thus to men's minds spontaneously, generally? Is it working, even where hardly recognized, or least to be expected, beneath existing forms and customs? Is it in the air—an indefinable influence, yet a new breath of the Spirit, in which thought expands, and faith receives fresh vitalities?

For our answer we turn first to the Roman

Catholic Church; and we face at once the fact of Modernism. We shall consider what may be known of the nature, extent, and inherent possibilities of this movement, which an Italian newspaper first called Modernism, and which the Pope by his anathema has baptized with that name.

II

MEDIATING MODERNISM

MODERNISM is a renovating movement within the Roman Catholic Church. A general idea of it would be conveyed by saying that it is an endeavor of loyal Catholics to adapt the Roman Church to the thought and life of the modern world. For many years the seeds of Modernism have been germinating in quiet places; within the last five years it has become a widely disseminated influence. The Vatican is now alarmed at its extent and vitality; and some Protestant observers, who are in close touch with it, believe that it is destined to be the greatest religious movement since the time of the Reformation.

We shall seek first in the following pages to interpret its leading ideas, and to appreciate

its spirit and hopes. We shall then be prepared to consider whether Modernism opens a way of mediation between Roman and Protestant Christianity, which eventually may lead to a truer Catholicism, comprehensive of us all.

One of the most vigorous leaders in the Modernist movement has said that its name is something of a misnomer; for every historic development in the Catholic Church was in its time a modern movement, as was the scholastic philosophy itself, into which, as a secure fastness, the Pope would compel theology now to retreat. But the name characterizes an issue. Modernists have all passed through the scholastic education, and entered the broad fields, enclosed by no walls save only the widening horizons of knowledge, history, science and life,—which all thinkers must cultivate together as fellow-helpers to the truth. We adopt, so they tell us, the name Modernist solely in order that it may be understood by the people, and because the Pope has accredited it; we prefer,

they say, "to define our religious attitude simply as Christians and Catholics, living in harmony with the spirit of their time." [1]

The Vatican has issued two authoritative utterances concerning Modernism, besides several allocutions of the Pope. The first is the Syllabus, which was put forth in July, 1907; it enumerates sixty-five erroneous opinions, which are not to be allowed. A Modernist might regard the Syllabus as Erasmus did the libel, which, he said, the Spaniard, Stunica, had presented to Leo X., containing sixty thousand heresies extracted from his writings. The other, later bull of the Pope against Modernism is the Encyclical on "Feeding the Lord's Flock (so called from the first words, *Pascendi Domenici Gregis*), which was promulgated in September last.

One representation of Modernism is given in these documents of the Vatican; another portrayal of it may be gathered from the

[1] *Il Programma dei Modernisti, Risposta all' Enciclica di Pio X.*, p. 5.

writings of the Modernists themselves. These are numerous, but they are scattered in newspaper articles, pamphlets, and books in several languages.

We will look first at the composite portrait of the Modernist which has been drawn by Roman prelates, and sanctioned by the Pope. It is painted in vivid colors. The lines of it are drawn with decided strokes. Its features are brought out with emphasis so marked that none of the faithful can possibly mistake it; and the light thrown upon it is so glaring that no softening touch relieves its harshness, and no expression of its spirit gleams for a moment over its countenance. This portrayal of Modernism, furnished to the Pope as the last masterpiece of the school of the Jesuits, is now hung up for the astonishment of the Christian world in the rogue's gallery of the Holy Inquisition as the latest and a conspicuous example of the pride and presumptuous self-will which would rebel against all sacred authority and betray the divine certainties of the Christian faith.

We may note at a glance in this portrayal of the Modernists in the Encyclical such characteristics as these: They are "striving, by arts entirely new and full of subtlety, to destroy the vital energy of the Church"; they are "enemies of the Church." But still worse is this characteristic of them: "They are the most pernicious of all the adversaries of the Church. For, as we have said, they put their designs for her ruin into operation, not from without, but from within; hence, the danger is present almost in the very veins and heart of the Church." "None is more skilful, none more astute, than they in the employment of a thousand noxious arts; for they combine the part of rationalist and Catholic." And these double-minded Modernists within the Church "employ a very clever artifice, namely, to present their doctrines without order and systematic arrangement into one whole, scattered and disjointed one from another, so as to appear to be in doubt and uncertainty while they are in reality firm and

steadfast." Indeed, "every Modernist sustains and comprises within himself many personalities; he is a philosopher, a believer, a theologian, an historian, a critic, an apologist, a reformer." Nor is this all of his offense; his activities are as manifold as his personality is diversified. It is a "fact, which indeed is well calculated to deceive souls, that they lead lives of the greatest activity, of assiduous and ardent application to every branch of learning, and that they possess, as a rule, a reputation for strictest morality." They act "as though there were a frenzy of propagandism upon them." "They lift up their heads in arrogance, and pride is in all their hearts; hence their fondness for all novelties." "They attempt to ascribe to a love of truth that which is really the result of pride and obstinacy." "They are possessed by the empty desire of being talked about, and they know they would never succeed in this were they to say what has always been said." The Papacy "first showed them kindness"; then it "treated

them with severity," and at last, although with great reluctance, it had recourse "to public reproof." But this was fruitless. "They bowed their head for a moment, but it was soon uplifted more arrogantly than ever." Their case moreover seems to be hopeless. "This almost destroys all hope of cure, that their very doctrines have given such a bent to their minds that they disdain all authority and brook no restraint."

Such being the personal characteristics of the Modernists, as they are portrayed in the Encyclical, the thoughts of their hearts are also exposed for the reprobation of the faithful. These the Pope understands better than they themselves know them. It is given to him to discern what is in these men, as only the supreme teacher in the wisdom given him from above can do. Consequently, the Encyclical presents the thoughts of the Modernists in a systematic statement of their philosophy and theology, such as they themselves have never ventured to give. We will here follow only the main lines of the

description of it, not pausing to fill in its philosophic details.

The root of all their errors is said to be agnosticism,—that is, a teaching which confines man's knowledge within the field of phenomena. Hence they have cast aside all the sound proofs of God which the scholastic philosophy established. "This," we are told, "is only the negative part of the system of the Modernist; the positive part consists in what they call vital immanence." But thereby, according to the philosophy of the Vatican, religion is founded only on sentiment, and all rational foundations are swept away. To forsake the safe syllogisms of St. Thomas is to hasten toward atheism. The whole teaching of the Modernist is tainted with the original sin of an agnostic philosophy, which corrupts all their thought and which would destroy religion itself. It is seen "by how many roads Modernism leads to the annihilation of all religion. The first step in this direction was taken by Protestantism; the second is made by Mod-

ernism; the next will plunge headlong into atheism."

This original sin of agnosticism, as it is imputed to them by the Pope, appears in all their doctrines. It taints their thoughts on all subjects, such as dogmas, history, and the traditions of the Church, the subjection of faith to science, the criticism of the Holy Scriptures, the authority of the Catholic Church, and the Christ of history and of faith.

Protestant unbelievers in the literary and historical searching of the Scriptures—the so-called Higher Criticism—will find an unexpected ally in the Biblical commission appointed by Pius X. for the safe study of the Bible. The Holy Father might be welcomed as a most powerful coadjutor in the American League for the Defense of the Bible. The Pope's present solicitude, however, for the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures has a different source from theirs. The principle of a supernatural authority, having compulsory sovereignty over the faithful, is the mainspring of the

Pope's contention of the infallibility of the Bible.

It is interesting, and very significant, to observe that one reason which the Pope gives for the consideration shown to Biblical criticism by the Modernists in the Roman Church is "the close alliances, independent of all differences of nationality or religion, which the historians and critics of this school have formed among themselves." A second cause is "the boundless effrontery of these men." This remarkable characteristic should not be overlooked—the Pope himself has acknowledged and emphasized it—that scholars who profess themselves to be good Catholics are in close alliance with the Biblical scholars of the Protestant world.

A mortal offense is found in their application of their false methods of reasoning to the authority of the Church. To them its authority is the product of the "collective conscience"; but this is to deny, as though it were an error of past times, the Pope's claim that "authority came to the Church

from without, that is to say, directly from God; and it was then rightly held to be autocratic." The Modernists would say that "it is for the ecclesiastical authority, therefore, to shape itself to democratic forms." But that is the last thing which Pius X. intends to do. Nor can he submit to the subordination of the Church to the State, which he holds would result from their pernicious principles.

We need not discuss the disastrous effects, which, according to the Vatican, follow by a rapid descent from the original, total philosophic depravity of all the Modernists—such as the more intelligible views which they would entertain of the nature and efficacy of the sacraments, or their conception of theology as a symbolic presentation of divine truth, changing and finding ever new expressions and interpretations according to the habits of mind in different ages, and the evolution of thought through history. The fruits of these errors and of the zealous propagandism of the Modernists are best de-

scribed in the following words from the Encyclical: "We have to lament at the sight of many young men once full of promise and capable of rendering great service to the Church, now gone astray. . . . And there is another sight that saddens us too: that of so many other Catholics, who, while they certainly do not go so far as the former, have yet grown into the habit, as though they had been breathing a poisoned atmosphere, of thinking and speaking and writing with a liberty that ill becomes Catholics." "Note here, Venerable Brethren," so Pius X. laments, "the appearance already of that most pernicious doctrine which would make the laity a factor of progress in the Church." "The security of the Catholic name is at stake." "In all Catholicism there is absolutely nothing on which it [Modernism] does not fasten." "What is there left in the Church which is not to be reformed according to their principles?" "We should define it as the synthesis of all heresies." It is "the sap and the substance of all errors."

As though this peril of the subversion of Papal authority, and this threatening rebellion within the Church against all religion, were not of itself enough to justify the exercise of the Pontifical power for its suppression, the artifices and untiring efforts of the Modernists call for the utmost vigilance in every diocese.

These men "reflect that, after all, there is no progress without a battle, and no battle without its victim, and victims they are willing to be like the prophets and Christ himself." "And this policy they follow willingly and wittingly, both because it is part of their system that authority is to be stimulated, but not dethroned, and because it is necessary for them to remain within the ranks of the Church in order that they may gradually transform the collective conscience."

Such is Modernism according to Pius X. One may not deny the controversial cleverness of the Encyclical. The mark of the Jesuit is on every paragraph of it. Extreme

utterances and moderate views, diversified opinions and scattered sentences, torn from their context, or forced to their farthest conclusions, are brought together and compounded in the melting-pot of this Jesuitical zeal, from which there issues a resultant system which no Modernist would own, and which none need defend. The Encyclical is a caricature, not a portrait; but the condemnation of the Pope falls indiscriminately upon this whole mode of thought which he cannot appreciate. What is the meaning of Modernism? What may be its prophetic value for the Roman Church? What is its call to the Protestant world? Is it another *Renaissance,* or is it a passing breath of free thought? Is it only a new rationalism, or is it a new experience of religion? And does it carry within it energy of the truth which makes free?

To appreciate it we should know something of the men who are moved by this new spirit. From among those who stand out in the open, and upon whom the condemnation

of the Pope has already fallen, we will select a few preëminent representatives of this large and increasing comradeship of liberal Catholics. One of them we find in England, another in France, and others in Italy.

In England Father Tyrrell is a well-known leader, a servant elect of God for some message, and called by his energetic personality, his searching honesty of thought, his consuming flame of spirit. He has been suspended by the authority of St. Peter's successor from exercising all priestly functions, although, like an Apostle of old who had followed the Master through the whole length of the Holy Land, until he had come to Cæsarea Philippi, Father Tyrrell, after long discipleship and much questioning, has discovered for himself the Christ in the man Jesus, and henceforth would confess the foundation-faith which flesh and blood has not revealed to him.

The history of his own travail of soul is written in his last book, bearing the suggestive title, "Through Scylla and Charybdis."

By his inward purifying and illumining experience of religion he has been consecrated to a mediating priesthood between science and faith; and there cannot be taken from him, to use his own expression, this "royal priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, to which the official priesthood is related as a sacrament to its substance, or as the material and temporal to the spiritual and eternal." (*Ibid.*, p. 384.)

Modernism had its early spring in Biblical and historical criticism; and the first representative of this method of searching the Scriptures within the Roman Church, now that Schell in Germany is dead, is the Abbé Loisy in France. The following vivid description of him has been given by a French professor, who went one day to hear him lecture, and who was impressed by the Abbé's manner, and the smile which lit up his face, as he gave a critical elucidation of a perplexing Scripture.

"Curious to know how, in his chair of professor in the Sorbonne, M. Loisy com-

bines these two men which he says are in him" (the critic and the believer), "I went to hear one of his lessons.

"The course has for its object the examination of the Gospels to find in them the elements of a critical life of Jesus Christ. It takes place in rather a small room, arranged to accommodate students who take notes and not an unoccupied public. But the current celebrity of the Abbé Loisy is such that the hall was filled and a part of the audience had to stand, overflowing even into the corridor for lack of room." He found a seat quite near the Abbé, but where he could only see his profile. He continues: "At his first words I was not impressed. . . . And then I was provoked at not seeing the man's front view, and his profile seemed to me as insignificant as his words.

"But all of a sudden what a change! The Abbé was reading a text, verses 51 and 52 of the fourteenth chapter of Mark, where occurs that inexplicable episode between the moment when the soldiers arrest Jesus and

that when, the disciples having fled, they lead him to the house of the high priest. Mark says that a young man followed Jesus, having for a garment only a linen cloth, and that when other young men sought to lay hold on him, he left the linen cloth in their hands and fled naked.

"While reading that the voice of M. Loisy was lowered, and, when he had finished, his profile lit up with a smile which illuminated all of his face that I could see, and which passed from mouth to mouth all over the audience, including a dozen Abbés, only one of whom, either obstinately frowning or not understanding, did not smile.

"Oh! that smile of the Abbé Loisy! Whoever has seen it will never forget it.

"It is not the smile of a malicious person who banters or jeers; it is not the smile of a pedant who scoffs; it is not the smile of a dissenter who is proud of his dissent; it is the smile of a reasonable man who exercises his reason, and who does so for the pleasure of exercising it, because that exercise is

properly the end, the essential function of life, because we are only in this world to act with reason.

"I asked myself a little while ago whether the Abbé Loisy would submit to the ecclesiastical censures. I followed with interest what was told us of the attempted efforts to make him prevent his condemnation by a retraction pure and simple; I should like to have been present at that interview which, they say, took place at his home, in Bellevue, when five envoys of the Pope—three ecclesiastics and two laymen—came to adjure him to desist. My curiosity has need of no more anecdotes or confidences about the case of the Abbé Loisy. I have seen his smile; it is that of a man who will never give up. The Holy See may prepare his excommunication. It is possible that from a man who seems in such feeble health there may be torn words or a line of writing; there will never be torn from him a true submission. That smile the Holy See could only suppress by means of the funeral pile; now, there is no longer

the funeral pile, and if there were, I see from here that smile persisting through the smoke of the execution."

"That is what I said to myself while listening to the Abbé Loisy. Meanwhile he went his way, a little slowly, but invincible, explaining what he calls the 'editing' process of Mark, . . . applying the critical method, not only with ingeniousness, but with joy, in the simple and dignified tone of a disinterested thinker. The audience entered with sympathy into the honest work of this frank and well-armed thought. We lived there, during an hour all too short, in an intellectual atmosphere whose purity invigorated us."[1]

While the Abbé Loisy represents the historical and Biblical scholarship, which has been one of the upland springs of the Modernists' thought, Senator Fogazzaro has given voice to the feeling of the people, which, after too long ebb of irreligion, seems

[1] M. Aulard, quoted in Houton's *La Question Biblique*, p. 133.

now to be coming in as a flood tide of social religious renovation. It has been said with truth that his novel "Il Santo" bears very much the same relation to reform in the Roman Church that "Uncle Tom's Cabin" bore to the anti-slavery agitation. A cause which finds living expression in a great novel, which the people take to heart, cannot fail.

Nor is the influence of "Il Santo" cut off by the single stroke of the Holy Father's prohibition of it. To the decree indeed which has put it on the Index, Fogazzaro has consented, very much as a loyal citizen submits to a decision of authority, which he cannot admit to be just. But it is a mistake to suppose that therefore Fogazzaro has recanted. On the contrary, in a lecture given afterward in Paris, in January, 1907, he stated with clearness and firmness his position. He said:

"If it is the fortune of a book to raise a tempest, the hour of attack and violent defence does not lack sad moments for the author who sees his thought disfigured by

adversaries of bad faith, and sometimes even by friends more zealous than wise. And then the author dreams of an assembly devoted to the discussion of which his work is the object, ready to listen to him, not as an accused man who is on the point of being condemned or released, but rather as a witness whose testimony has been unnaturally forced or misunderstood, and who asks to be heard once more in order to reëstablish his proof of the truth, before authorized persons who will take action upon it with scrupulous and intelligent honesty." He explained and reaffirmed the ideas of Giovanni Selva, and especially his view that there is a sacred affinity between the truth which is the object of faith and the truth which is the object of science, and that consequently hardly a truth has been gained from science from which religion does not absorb vital succor and grow.

"Giovanni Selva thinks that religion is above all action and life. For the practice of the Gospel is more important than in-

tellectual religious progress. Love comes before faith. This is the culminating point of the doctrine of Giovanni Selva, who for precisely such reasons does not rebel against the decrees of authority, but no more does he deny that which his own conscience believes to be true."

The audience greeted with enthusiastic applause this declaration by Senator Fogazzaro of his continued fidelity to the truths to which his prohibited novel bears witness.

A distinguished figure among the Modernists, a born leader of men, who commands a devoted following in Italy, is Don Romolo Murri. He is portrayed as a man of pale countenance, large forehead under dark hair, having piercing eyes, an aquiline nose, finely chiselled features, his whole person expressing distinction and will. His appearance inspires confidence. One says of him, "He will not turn aside." His language, when asked to recant, was "respectful and direct, as that of a free spirit and a brave man." These were his words: "Priest I am, Priest

I remain, respectful of authority, faithful to my duties. I have suffered long years of grief through love of the truth, and I feel in myself the painful conflict which at this hour of profound crisis agitates Catholicism. I maintain always—without regard to my possible deficiencies—that the ideas which inspire my criticism and my action assure to the religious society a renewed vigor and a more fruitful civil influence. I ask a sympathetic silence of free and believing souls."

He has not himself been silenced by the ban which has been placed upon his speech. Recently he collected his scattered writings, and published them in a volume, which, he says, is "a book of war." He is not merely a scholar to whom there has been opened the enlightenment of modern learning; he does not seek simply to set the historian and Biblical critic free from an enforced submission to tradition; he is a man wrestling with the problems of social and political life; he is the inspirer of the Christian Democrats of young Italy. He sees democracy con-

fronted by "the political combination which is called Catholic." He goes among the people, and he knows that "many Catholics hate Catholicism because they do not understand it, and they do not understand it because what they see around them is a caricature of it." He laments "a poverty of the ideal in Italy"; but he sees also "a revival of idealism on the part of a few." "What Italy lacks," he says, "is moral energy. A bad stench as of something decayed oozes from all the pores of her political life. The cause of it lies in the lack of real religion. The principal cause of it belongs to those priests who represent reaction." Murri declares: "We desire a Christianity more pure, more intense, more practical, more Christian, more conformed to its original, more conformed to the Gospel." Such is the temper and spirit of those men who are not willingly rebels against authority, but who would modernize Roman Catholicism in the free spirit of democracy, for the renewal of the moral and religious life of the people.

Surrounding such outspoken leaders, there are groups of scholars and priests, some of whom are becoming well recognized; others are as yet too withdrawn from publicity to be personally singled out for Papal condemnation. The latter are sometimes spoken of as Catholics "who would conform themselves constantly to the actual situation, concealing their originality, and attacking obliquely the errors which they wish to destroy; as living in an atmosphere of defiance, and also, it must be said, of apprehension of the Roman measures which can at any time, and without a word of explanation, brush aside the fragile fragrance and the whole ideal of their dream of renovation." This explains and excuses, it is said, "the attitude, more or less timid, more or less embarrassed, and always wandering, of their writings." This description, however true it may seem at times to their policy, fails to do justice to the spirit which is possessing them.

It is not just to characterize their evasions of Papal excommunication as Jesuitical.

For their immediate task is a double, but not inconsistent one—to deny the Roman Cæsarism, and to affirm the true Catholicism. The publishers of the liberal Catholic Review, *Il Rinnovamento,* in Milan are adroit, but they do not recant, when in reply to the Papal threat of major excommunication, they merely change somewhat the management, announce that at present they will avoid the discussion of certain topics—and continue the publication of the Review! It is the determination of the Modernists honestly to do their best to respect and to avoid direct collision with Papal authority, while they continue their work of bringing authority itself to the judgment of a higher tribunal, the collective conscience, namely, of the Catholic Church. They will yield to external authority only that they may in time compel it to become subject to reason. This is not, indeed, the position which events quickly forced Martin Luther to take; neither is it exactly the position of Erasmus, who waited for a General Council, and saved his own

reputation by refusing a cardinal's red hat. These words of certain Italian Modernists have a bolder ring; they are willing to suffer as Erasmus was not; they see before them not preferments, but penalties: "We know well that our word will have no weight with you; and to-morrow, we are certain espionage, censure, calumny, will be renewed against us with redoubled vigor. Everything will be done to make us apostates. But we will stand firm at our post, prepared to endure everything, to sacrifice everything except the truth. Our voice, reverent indeed but frank, unambiguous, sincere, will be ready to expose every action of yours which is not inspired by wisdom and equity. We mean to be not rebels, but sincere Catholics, to the salvation of Christianity. . . . We have desired to say this to you at the solemn moment in which, to our confusion and distress, you have willed to strike at our dearest friend. Amid the bitterness which it has inflicted upon our hearts, we send him a greeting and an augury. May Don Romolo

Murri drink the bitter cup of his suffering, not as a beaten foe who rebels against the conqueror, but as a free man, clear-sighted, generous, and assured that his sacrifice is being made for the high Christian ideals of Justice and Truth."[1]

Of Murri, and these others, who, like him, are suffering for conscience' sake, no word of reproach can be spoken, like that which Luther wrote to Erasmus, when he invited him to be a spectator of the magnificent tragedy in which he was not fitted to be an actor.

From the persons engaged in this reform we turn now to consider their method of thought.

Modernism is not to be understood as one might understand the platform of a political party, which has been drafted in a committee room, and adopted by delegates for the purposes of a campaign. Modernism is a certain

[1] *What We Want*, an open letter to Pius X. from a group of Priests. Translated by A. L. Lilley.

attitude of mind corresponding to our times; it is a tendency of thought rather than a body of doctrine; it is an intellectual method rather than a creed; it is a vitalizing spirit making all things new, rather than a full grown and completed theology. Like all great movements of life and thought it comprehends within itself diversities of beliefs, and its voice is as the voice of many waters. Its exponents are by no means agreed in all things among themselves; there are radicals and there are moderates among them; there are minds adrift, and there are minds sailing straight along clear courses; all, however, have cast loose from their anchorage on the old scholasticism, and are borne on the flood of a vast tidal movement.

Thus Father Tyrrell says: "It would then be unreasonable to expect my work to be anything but unacceptable to those who do not believe in the proximity of a deluge or the necessity of an ark. I address myself, therefore, to those who believe in both, for the simple reason that they are already

afloat." This characteristic, at least, is common to all the Roman Catholic Modernists—they are in the stream, they are afloat on the mighty flood of the world's present thought and life.

Certain general principles of their thinking may be discerned, and a still stronger coherence may be found in their common methods and aims.

We notice first the sources of their new thought.

A large number of them in France and Italy have been led to their present position through their critical and historical studies. To the charge of the Encyclical that they have been misled by an *a priori* and agnostic philosophy, they reply that the allegation is false. Our position, they declare, is very different from the representation of it given in the Encyclical. That description of it the writer of the Papal letter has drawn from his own ignorance of modern thought. Philosophy does not control their criticism; on the contrary, criticism has led them to their

present mental attitude. They have adopted and followed with intellectual candor the methods of critical and historical research which now are prevalent generally among scholars. They apply these methods to Biblical criticism, and to the development of the Church, its traditions, and its dogmas.

Before the Encyclical was written, charging them with agnosticism as the root of all their errors, they had addressed an appeal to the Pope in which they said, "We bring to contemporary agnosticism good news." And besides this declaration of a group of Italian priests, Father Tyrrell has said, "Revelation is to theology what the stars are to astronomy." It would have been a fairer elaboration of their thought, had the writer of the Pope's letter explained that the stars remain the same through all the ages, while men's conceptions of the stars have changed from age to age. The stars endure forever, but man's astronomy changes as his knowledge grows. So, the Modernists would hold, the Divine realities, which are the objects of our

contemplation, abide always in the firmament of faith; but our theology of them changes with the thoughts of men. Progressive Catholics are seeking to understand the eternal realities in the interpretations of modern theology.

Since their appeal, to which the Pope turned a deaf ear, soon after he had condemned them, they made their reply to the Encyclical, reaffirming their whole position with clearness and courage. Accused of an atheistic philosophy, they answer: "This confession of impotence which agnosticism makes in the presence of the mystery of the universe is radically different from our spirit. Our apologetics has been precisely the endeavor to escape from an agnostic doctrine of knowledge, superseding it, just as agnosticism already had represented the effort to supersede a materialistic positivism."[1]

They have generally adopted the present

[1] *Il Programma dei Modernisti, Risposta all' Enciclica di Pio X.*, p. 94.

evolutionary manner of thought. In presenting the Christian faiths to the minds of men—that is, in what is known as Christian apologetics—they use the methods and results of science without hesitation. This company of priests in their appeal to the Pope do not hesitate to say, "The evolution of faith cannot fail to be coördinated with the intellectual and moral evolution of man." It is their aim "to make this life of faith, of hope, and of love, live again for modern society, which is so ardently aspiring after the divine; and to induce it to accept in their entirety the truths of Christianity, by adapting them to its historical and psychological habits of mind, as formerly they were adapted to a metaphysical habit of mind." They hold that the evolution of dogma is an evident historical fact which corresponds with the laws of the evolution of the human mind. They do not deny the necessity of dogmas; they say, "As for theology, we affirm that there always has been a theology, and always will be; and, moreover, we also

are engaged in making one." They claim therefore that theology "has varied from age to age, and can and must change in our time also, assimilating its culture, if Christianity still wishes to answer to the spiritual demands of our time." They say boldly to the Pope, "You have preferred the men of the syllogism to the men of profound knowledge as though the salvation of the Church lay, not in the objective establishment of historical truth, as your predecessor desired it should, but in maintaining intact traditions which are devoid of meaning and foundation."[1]

Still more striking is Father Tyrrell's manner of asserting that the Gospel is subject in its forms of expression and in its doctrinal interpretations to the habits of thought prevalent in different ages: "Had Christ come in another age to another people, the Gospel, written in different words and deeds, had been still the same Gospel, the record of the same Power and Spirit, albeit in conflict

[1] *What We Want*, p. 55.

with another class of oppositions and obstructions."[1]

In his reply to the Encyclical Father Tyrrell is a match for the rapier of the Jesuit;[2] with thrust as keen he answers the claim of the Holy See that religion is derived from deductive reasoning; that God is to be reached by an argument, and not through an inward experience; and that the Roman Catholic Church in its entirety was implicitly the immediate creation of Christ himself on the earth. "A bold contention," he says, "that all ecclesiastical development is simply a mechanical unpacking of what was given in a tight parcel 2,000 years ago." He justifies the use of the word modernism as "an expression of the opposite contention—of a belief in time, in growth, in vital and creative evolution." He strikes back

[1] *Opus cit.*, p. 297.

[2] Tyrrell was deposed from the order of the Jesuits on account of his refusal to disavow his letter to a scientific man. He has published it under the title "A Much Abused Letter."

with a vigorous blow when he declares of the Encyclical that "all this vast controversial construction is poised on the apex of a science-theory and psychology that are as strange as astrology to the modern mind."

We notice next the Modernists' principle of the development of the institutions and dogmas of the Church.

The only kind of development of the Roman Church which the Papacy will tolerate, resembles the idea of development which prevailed as the scientific theory of evolution in the eighteenth century. It is known as the theory of preformation—the chick exists already preformed in the egg; its growth consists simply in bringing out what was previously packed in the shell. It is development by explication of what is already there. With this older theory of preformation modern science contrasts the conception of a specific predetermination of life in the germ, and its development, through the co-working of the internal and external

factors of evolution, some of which are known, others of which are unknown; and this evolution occurs through a process of variation and adaptation under the law of natural selection. The Modernist's view of evolution in the Church and its theology resembles the now accepted scientific conception of organic evolution, while the Pope has not yet advanced beyond the crude idea of a mechanical unfolding of an original deposit of the faith. The Modernists with their critical and historical studies of the Bible, and the Church—whatever idols of the schools they may cast down—are not about to destroy either the historic fact of the continuous life of the Church, or the normative power of the original Gospel of Christ. On the contrary, with an intelligible and reasonable conviction, they can hold their faith in the permanent energy of the life of Christ in Christianity. "I spoke," says the Saint, "of the eternal vitality of Catholic doctrine, of the power which the soul of Catholic doctrine possesses, of continually transforming its own

body, increasing its strength and beauty unlimitedly."

This conviction of the Saint follows directly from the Modernist belief in the immanence of God in man, and the permanent presence of Christ in his Church.

Here they are influenced by one of the profoundest and most vitalizing faiths which are pervading and renewing the Protestant world. In its spiritual simplicity this is the belief that God is in man, as well as above man; that the Divine is present in the thoughts of men, to be known in the experience of men, as well as a God above us, transcending the measure of our life. God exists first for us not at the end of an argument, or as the probable conclusion of some course of reasoning; but primarily He is felt in our sense of dependence upon Him, and known in the perception of reality which is given in our whole experience of the moral values of our true life. God proves himself to us, before we can prove Him to ourselves. Our reasoning, whether from nature or from

history, is reasonable just because the Divine reality is before our thought, and in our thought, and beyond all our thought. The Pope regards this vital faith of the Modernists as though it were a vain reliance upon mere religious sentiment with a loss of all mental grasp upon a Divine Power above us, and consequently a fatal plunge into atheism. They state again with firmness their position in this reply: "We are then immanentists, but the immanentism is not that gross error which the Encyclical seems to believe; it is, on the contrary, the way followed in order to attain to the perception of the Divine by all the best Christian tradition."[1]

How little religion is with them a mere sentiment appears from such words as these, which the authors of the Papal condemnation had before them when they put them under the ban: "God in Christ, and Christ in the Church—that is the profound conviction by which all our actions are inspired."[2] And

[1] *Il Programma dei Modernisti*, p. 104.
[2] *What We Want*, p. 7.

again such words as these: "For us, profoundly Christian souls, religion, far from being a vague, mystical feeling which soothes the spirit and isolates it in a barren egoism, is a Divine reality, which kindles into life and exalts the souls of men, and, knitting them together in a bond of brotherhood, directs their life toward a supreme and common goal."[1]

The Abbé Loisy, who is one of the more radical Biblical critics, denies with the same positiveness the allegation that their historical criticism destroys the substance of their Christian faiths. When in outward submission to the authority of the Pope he gave up his lectures in the Sorbonne, he protested with energy that he was not separating reason and faith; he said: "Catholic priest I am, and Catholic priest I shall remain; there are not in my mind two airtight compartments, one for science and reason, the other for faith and religion."[2]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 5.
[2] *La Question Biblique*, etc., Houtin, p. 137.

And the followers of Loisy, of whom there are many notwithstanding his enforced retirement, repeating the words of their leader, declare: "Catholics we have been, Catholics we remain; critics we have been, critics we remain. In accepting the established scientific results without any conclusion against that which is of a superior domain—that of faith—we can have confidence that we shall not depart from the supernatural order."[1]

Many Protestants will find themselves more in sympathy with this allegation of the Pope against the modern school of Biblical critics and historians, that they separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith, leaving the former in uncertainty and the latter in an ideal glorification. It is true that the Modernists generally, both Protestant and Catholic, study history as history, and justify faith as a spiritual apprehension of the religious facts of history. They hold that the method and logic of these two in-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

quiries are different, and each of them is to be pursued to its own end; and in so doing, it must be admitted that at times they seem to leave the province of historical knowledge and the realm of faith at an unbridged distance from each other. But an abrupt sundering of the two does not necessarily follow from their principles; the separation is in reality bridged by their beliefs in the immanence of God in nature, and of the Spirit of Christ in the Church. If they seem to deny any interference of the supernatural, it is only because they believe that the natural is made for the permanent indwelling of the supernatural. How completely the Encyclical mistakes their view of Christ, and how they continue to worship in His name, may best be shown by their own words—such as the following which occur in their spirited reply to the Encyclical: "The Christ is in himself one and the same, but He may be considered as the object of history and the object of faith. As a man, the person of Jesus and His outward actions were

known by means of sensible experience, and in that sense He belongs to history: as Christ, in as far as He is united to God in a most unique manner, and is a mediator between God and us of His revelation and grace, He can only be known by a spiritual and divine light, and in this sense belongs not to history but to faith." "An example occurs to us which will render our thought more clear. The mathematician, as such, can not catch a harmony which reveals itself instead to a musical mind: but that does not mean that such harmony may not be real, nor that the musical mind creates it. The musical mind finds it where others would not find it. The same thing might be said in our case. Religious facts contain mysterious meanings which pure science does not catch; faith, with its singular faculty, penetrates these meanings and succeeds in living them. That does not mean that it creates them: it finds them."[1]

With them the Christian faith is not, as

[1] *Il Programma dei Modernisti*, pp. 66, 114.

the Pope would have it, a mere sentiment, unstable as flowing water, upon which no reasoned faith can be founded; it is the touch of their life upon the Divine reality; it is a feeling of God which involves an intellectual apprehension of God, as perception is given in sensation. It is our human sense of dependence on God. In the history of the Church it is not merely the consciousness of Christian men that is to be considered; it is their consciousness of Christ—of the Christ himself, who is spiritually discerned. This is not a devitalized rationalism, it is rather a rationalized mysticism. Their thought in its inner principle is no more agnostic than Schleiermacher's "Discourses on Religion" were. They answer truly that "the tolerance of the Encyclical is extended rather to the deist who separates God from his world"; its condemnation falls upon those Christian theists who find God in men. In this faith in God's manifestation of himself in and through human experience, progressive Catholics are certainly in the

same stream that has vivified and renewed our whole modern theology.

In harmony with these convictions is the Modernist's view of religious authority.

From the profound conviction of religion as an indwelling energy and life, the Modernist's conception of the source and nature of the authority of the Church naturally follows. It was Martin Luther's personal experience of the faith that justifies, which led him away from Rome, and left him standing alone under the whole heavens before God. It is the inward experience of spiritual religion which leads the neo-Catholics away from Rome, and leaves them, not outside the Church, but determined to stand within it, appealing to the collective conscience of the Church. Here, then, is the real issue between the Modernists and the Papacy. It centres in the principle of authority. Where in the last appeal does the authority of Christ reside? The problem of practice as well as of thought is this—how is it possible to reconcile liberty of the spirit with

any outward order? to find the source and vitality of religion in immediate personal experience, and a succession of personal Christian experiences from age to age, and yet to maintain Christianity as a visible and supreme authority in the world?

With the problem thus clearly recognized, we proceed to let the Modernists define for themselves their attitude toward the Roman Magisterium, or ecclesiastical authority.

They protest with one voice that they are not rebels against authority. They would recognize and obey all external authority which seems to them to be historically Christian, naturally developed in the progress of the Church, profitable for men, and not destructive of the inward vitality of Christian experience. In an allocution to which they have replied, Pius X. had said: "And rebels, indeed, they are, those who profess and spread abroad under artful forms monstrous errors on the evolution of dogma; on the

return to the Gospel—the Gospel, that is to say, stripped, as they put it, of the explanations of theology, of the definitions of Councils, of the maxims of asceticism; on the emancipation of the Church, but conceived after a new fashion—an emancipation which will enable them not to revolt, so that they may not be cut off, and yet not to submit, so that they need not abandon their own convictions; and, finally, on adaptation to the times in everything—in speech, in writing, even in the preaching of a charity without faith, which, while extremely tender to the unbeliever, is opening up the path to eternal ruin for all."

They reply, "Authority condemns because it does not understand." They say, "As Christians, we accept the authority of the Church, as the careful dispenser of eternal truth inherited from Christ, to regulate and govern our religious life, and to interpret and supply its living needs and claims. We accept, further, the dogmas and rites by which all souls, in the communion of faith,

hope, and charity, may participate in the life of the living Christ."[1]

They confess indeed to their tenderness for unbelievers, and for the welfare of the Church as well; but with a fine insistence upon history they return to the Pope his admonition: "St. Paul's tenderness also had to face opposition, and it came from Peter, who in his turn was tender towards the timid scruples of the Pharisees. But the tenderness of Peter availed only to prolong for a little the agony of the Judæo-Christian community. The tenderness of St. Paul for the unbeliever infused into Christianity a force of permanent vitality."

We will let Father Tyrrell define their principle of authority; none among them has spoken with more boldness or clearness. "Deferential within the limits of conscience and sincerity to the official interpreters of her [the Church's] mind, they must, nevertheless, interpret such interpretations in accordance with the still higher and highest

[1] *What We Want*, p. 47.

canon of Catholic truth; with the mind of Christ. It is He who sends us to them; not they who send us to Him. He is our first and our highest authority. Were they to forbid the appeal, their own dependent authority would be at an end."[1] Again Father Tyrrell affirms, "Of unconditioned obedience to an avowedly conditioned authority the Catholic religion knows nothing." To him the issue has become defined as a conflict between absolutism and conscience —the collective conscience of the Church. "Any interpretation of papal infallibility which finds the organ of Catholic truth in the miraculously guided brain of one man; which renders futile the collective experience and reflection of the whole Church, destroys the very essence of Catholicism in favor of a military dictatorship which is the apotheosis of individualism. To interpret the Church's collective mind is the office of bishops, councils, and popes; as it is the office of a judge, not to make, but to interpret, the law. He

[1] *Opus cit.*, p. 19.

is below it, not above it. They are witnesses to, not creators of, the Church's faith and practice. They speak *ex cathedra* so far as they say what she says; and in so doing what they say is infallible in the way that she is infallible."[1] He holds that "for purposes of law, order and unity" such interpretations must "prevail *in foro externo* over any non-official interpretation. But no man who submits himself to what, rightly or wrongly, he believes to be the Church's mind, is a heretic *in foro conscientiæ*, for he submits to that higher informal tribunal from which all formal and official tribunals derive their authority."

Divine authority is indeed primarily the truth as witnessed by the Spirit in the individual conscience; but, "Along with this sense of the Divine Immanence has grown that of the authority of the general over the individual mind and conscience, as being a relatively more adequate organ and expression of God's truth and God's will; as fur-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

nishing a standard from which the individual may not fall short, and which he must first attain before he is competent to criticise and develop it."[1] He regards those who "depart from current and well-established traditional beliefs solely on the strength of some personal view" as "following private judgment in its bad sense." By distinguishing the bad and socially harmful exercise of this right from the opposite, he would find a safeguard against mere individualism; but he would also save the liberty of the individual conscience and its function as an organ of Divine truth in this wise: "But when it is clear that a counter-belief is gaining ground in such a way that it represents the 'concensus' of the future; when the same conclusion is reached simultaneously and independently by different thinkers, one may, and at times one ought, to follow the belief that lives in the spirit (however small the number of its supporters) rather than that which stagnates in the formula (however

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 367.

vast the multitude of its passive adherents); for in so doing one departs from the dead letter only to conform oneself to a truer, higher, and more authoritative expression of the living spirit."[1]

The following citation seems to be a novel definition of authority for one who holds himself to be a loyal Catholic: "Authority, then, is not an external influence streaming down from heaven like a sunbeam through a cleft in the clouds and with a finger of light singling out God's arbitrarily chosen delegates from the multitude, over and apart from which they are to stand as His vicegerents. Authority is something inherent in, and inalienable from, that multitude itself; it is the moral coerciveness of the Divine Spirit of Truth and Righteousness immanent in the whole, dominant over its several parts and members; it is the imperativeness of the collective conscience."[2]

These, and similar conclusions with re-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 369.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

gard to sacerdotalism, he regards as "the inevitable results of a more adequate emphasis of the Divine Immanence." He throws the energy of his appeal from Cæsarism to Catholicism into this virile and imperative question: "Where is that God to whom alone both Pope and Council claim to be responsible? Is He immanent in the whole Church where we can ultimately learn His mind and will; or is He away beyond the stars where we can know nothing of either, save what the episcopate is given to know by some mysterious intuition? By what vehicle does He speak and communicate with us? By voices from the clouds or by the gradual evolution of His Mind and Will in the collective spirit of mankind?"[1] This is much the same attitude towards the authority of the Church that Luther took toward the authority of the Bible, when he replied to the papist who tried to confute him by quoting Scriptural texts to him: "The Scripture is under Christ as a servant. I

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

care not for that; . . . but I trust in Christ who is rightly Master and Lord over the Scriptures."

It has the ring of Luther's voice when the *Saint* in the presence of the Pope said, "Though they hurl vituperation and thunderbolts against me, not until the hour of my death will I cease crying aloud: What will Christ say? What will Christ say? To Him I appeal."

This appeal of Modernism Pius X. will not hear. These are the voices which he imagines he has power to silence.

Having thus described Modernism, its principles and its spirit, we may now seek an answer to the eager question, How far will it prevail, and what under its influence is the promise for Catholicism?

One conclusion seems inevitable; an unreformed Romanism cannot endure forever. An Apostolic primacy which has advanced itself to a spiritual dictatorship, has waiting for it in history the judgment of the Son of

man. That remains a question only of God's time. But, on the other hand, one cannot readily admit the conclusion that the Roman Church has been built up by the past centuries simply for the purpose of being doomed to destruction by the coming age. It is far easier to think that it has been providentially preserved for reformation within, under the influence of the reformation without, in order that ultimately through both reformations some larger providence for the whole world may be fulfilled.

To answer, therefore, the question concerning the future possibility of a renewed Catholicism, we should begin by observing to what extent the same elemental forces, which are pervading human thought and life outside the Roman pale, are now working, however silently, within it. Perhaps none could give better evidence with regard to this than the Italian priests, already quoted, have done, in this declaration: "Christianity exists in the world as a law of Love and of Truth. It is love and truth that inspire those two factors

of modern civilization—science and democracy. That we may make it Christian we have welcomed them, seeking to make them our own, without reserve, without fear, without excessive concern for the past."[1]

With such allies what cause can fail? With such aims what sacrifice can be withheld? With such hope what greater work of faith can love not do?

This is no strange thing that the same energies of modern life which have pervaded the Protestant world, should press for entrance from every side into the enclosure of the Roman Catholic dominion. Men's minds must live and breathe to-day in the same intellectual atmosphere; the Roman Catholic mind cannot, if it would, escape from the environment of free education. It may adapt its faith to it slowly; it may for a time refuse to go forth from its close systems into the freedom of it; but live in it, it must; it must breathe in the general intellectual atmosphere of the day, or die. Experimental

[1] *What We Want*, p. 23.

science has driven out abstract dogmatism. Eventually scholastic systems of divinity must give way to the religion of experience.

Working effectually with democracy and science are the influences of the educational institutions which are maintained by free governments; and together with these is the growing power of the laity in religious reform. We have already noticed how the Pope has taken alarm at the increasing interference of the laity in religious affairs, and that he laments the encouragement of it as one of the monstrous errors of the progressive Catholics. Education in the public schools and higher institutions of learning cannot fail in time to create a Roman Catholic laity who will show themselves intolerant of all intolerance in the realm of knowledge as well as in the state. They will desire, indeed, not so much an irreligious education, but a freer religious education. An interesting instance of this occurred year before last, when a large number of parents in an informal *plébiscite*, taken among the working classes of socialistic Milan, asked

that their children in the elementary schools should receive some form of religious education.

In Germany, educated Catholic laymen are those who "respectfully present observations and demand guarantees"; this German movement, so well informed an observer as Paul Sabatier regards as "having both more and less importance—less importance on the surface, more importance beneath," than is generally known.

This impression is confirmed by the unintended evidence afforded in a Pastoral Letter of German Bishops which was sent out last December. In it they repeatedly urge that diligent efforts be made to illumine the more educated laity, and to overcome a certain disquietude among the more educated and fear of the effect of the Encyclical in regard to their taking part in the progress of human culture.[1]

On the other hand, no one will deny the immense power of the organization of the

[1] See *La Civiltà Cattolica*, February 15, 1908.

Roman Church throughout the world. The Vatican is using all that power to destroy in the seminaries every trace of Modernism, and in every diocese to repress the publication and to prevent the sale of writings suspected of any taint of it. No evasions of Papal edicts can be tolerated; not only are the Bishops to be on the alert against it, but they themselves are to be watched, as they are directed to appoint a Vigilance Committee in each diocese to search out any writings that may convey to the minds of the faithful the germs of this most pernicious heresy.

Those who realize the tremendous power of Rome will say, Modernism will be crushed, as Jansenism in France has been; as history shows that the Roman Inquisition has put out, time and again, individual consciences. To such persons the powers of darkness seem to be greater than the all-surrounding light. It does not seem so to the Modernists, who have caught its beams upon their thoughts. They believe in the penetrating and pervasive energy of the light of history, science, and per-

sonal faith, which has already shone fully upon themselves. They may be cast down, but not destroyed. Loisy relinquishes his professorship, and continues thinking and writing. Fogazzaro consents to have his *Saint* put under the ban, and he lectures upon the views of Giovanni Selva. *Il Rinnovamento* changes an editor, bows to authority, and announces that it will continue to be published. The priests who told the Pope "What we want"—the same or another similar group of them—receive his condemnation, and immediately review it in another book. That is put upon the Index, but not until after its translation into French and English. Thus the mirrors which reflect the light may be shifted, but the light of modern learning is ceaselessly reflected within the Roman Church.

Moreover, the repressive policy of the Holy Father opens more windows than it closes. His extreme interdicts arouse courage greater than the fear of excommunication. His Encyclical, by its violent unreason, is a great aid

to reason. His reactionary pontificate forces the growth of free thought. In France it cuts down the independence of the Bishops—and prepares the soil for the upspringing in due season of a fresh assertion of the coördinate authority of the Episcopate. "If," says Sabatier, "the Holy Father lent a more attentive ear to what is going on in France, he would hear even those whom he rather unhappily calls 'his Bishops' in contradistinction to those created by Leo XIII., saying that they have obeyed 'from a sense of discipline . . . in the darkness.' A general who is obeyed only from a sense of discipline and in the darkness is not far off from defeat."

In other lands those who are in a good position to observe, declare that Modernism has increased more during these last five years than for twenty-five years before. Thirty years ago, it is said, it would not have occurred to the Italians that they could be really religious, and yet not accept in their entirety the teachings of the Church. Competent witnesses within, as well as interested

observers without Roman Catholicism, unite in the judgment that a crisis is impending. Thus the Abbé Houtin writes: "The outcome will be either to excommunicate at once a great number of heretics, and thereby provoke much trouble in the Church, or to tolerate the innovators who will continue their formidable propaganda quickly."

"In any way, however, the Pope may decide, he has before him something which he will not be able to arrest. This is the popularization of history. With this penetration of historic knowledge among the people the present crisis will become unceasingly more radical and more terrible. . . . But confronting the Papacy are no longer the humble, respectful, timid men of former times."[1]

Papal absolutism culminated in 1870 in the dogma of Infallibility. Has it already passed its culmination? and has the breaking crest of the wave been reached in the opening years of this century?

[1] *The Crisis in the Catholic Church*, Fourth International Congress.

It is difficult for most Protestants to believe that any good can come out of Rome. They are still under the inherited conviction that between Romanism and civilization it is a fight to the finish. One of the first things they will ask is, What practical politics of reform are possible within the Roman Church? Ideas, they are wont to say, are in the air; show us your programmes. They forget, indeed, that there are powers of the air, and that these powers sometimes sweep down suddenly over the plain. Ideas often make their own policies. Christian truths are the living energies; policies of men are but their vehicles. The ideas keep moving on, although at many stations their means of transportation may be changed.

Often we may see the forces that are gathering for some historic conflict, although no one can confidently predict the place or the tactics of the impending battle, not even the generals themselves. Gettysburg was an accidental battle-field; the issue was the fiat of the Almighty. So the Catholic reform,

we may rest assured, must come to pass; for we can now see the mighty influences in the field of religion which are working together to bring about an irrepressible conflict. But the place and the time, the point where the issue shall be decided—who shall predict? The result, when the decisive hour is come—who can doubt?

The numbers of the Modernists cannot be told; no enrolment of the chief supporters of this movement can be publicly given.

In some dioceses of France and of Italy, we are told on good authority that nearly all the young priests have been won over to the new ideas, while in neighboring dioceses the proportion may not be a sixteenth or even less. In the seminaries where there may be a professor who is so true a scholar that he thinks any thought is orthodox which is true, or one who has a prophetic soul of sincerity, the fecundity of such influence is marvelous. If the older priests cannot keep step with their younger brothers, they give to them their sympathy. They have a "note of warm

friendship for men whose intellectual position they may not comprehend."

At present the Modernists represent a general tendency rather than an organized party. They have had several meetings and consultations in different places, and enough about them is known to show that they are gathering a large and rapidly increasing following. Abbé Houtin says, their most moderate prototype has for his pseudonym Giovanni Selva; and his sponsor Senator Fogazzaro says: "His true name is Legion. He lives, thinks, and works in France, in England, in Germany, in America, as well as in Italy. He wears the priestly garb and the uniform of the soldier, as well as the coat of a civilian. He shows himself at the universities, he hides himself in the seminaries. He fights in the press, he prays in the inmost recesses of the monastery. He almost no more preaches sermons, but he holds conferences. He is exegete and historian, theologian and scholar, journalist and poet. He does not always write. He is at times only

an impassioned reader, only a believer, as also a thinker. He is a republican, he is a loyalist, he is a Christian democrat, he is simply a liberal."[1]

If the Holy Father has reason to be alarmed by the manifold personality of the Modernist, he has no less cause for his apprehension that they will leave nothing untouched by their reformatory hands. When we put together from their various writings the objects which from their several points of view they desire to see accomplished, the list of their aims reaches considerable proportions. The transformation and purification of the government and administration of the Church; reduction of the number of Italian cardinals, and an increase of foreign cardinals in the government at Rome; decentralizing the pontifical power, changing the papacy from a too monarchical into a more constitutional rule; abandonment of its bad

[1] *Ibid.* Quoted from *Les Idees Religieuses de Giovanni Selva* in *Demain*, 8 février, 1907. Also reported in *Corriere Della Sera*, January 19, 1907.

systems of coercion; restoration of the autonomy of the Episcopate; publicity of trials, responsibility for decisions; reforms in the studies in the seminaries, and education of the clergy to meet modern demands; participation of the laity in the government of the Church; changes in the Congregation of the Index and other councils of the Vatican; decrease in the external devotions and a spiritual renovation of religious ceremonials; removal of corruptions; a priesthood better trained in modern ideas and fitted for social service; and to some extent the modifying of enforced celibacy; these, and other measures of renovation and progress in response to the needs of modern life, besides their demands for liberty to pursue critical, historical, and scientific studies within the Church, and the right to remake theological interpretations of the facts and faiths of Christianity, constitute a sufficiently extensive prospect of innovation to justify the apparent panic of the Encyclical.

Any enumeration, however, of the various

evils which Modernists would have removed, fails to represent the largeness and positive vitality of the movement as a whole. It has been justly observed that Modernism differs from previous liberal attempts in this respect that these have been revolts against particular dogmas, practices or superstitions; but the Modernists have something better to do. They would clear the whole air of the Church. They would purify the stream at the fountain. They will not be content with cutting off this or that parasitic error; they will enrich the soil of faith with all knowledge, and enhance the life of the plant.[1] In short, they would see a general renovation within the Roman Church, and they would not lead an exodus out of it. This estimate of the breadth and hopefulness of the movement, which intelligent observers outside it have formed, agrees with the feeling inspiring it, which finds expression in such words as these of the Italian priests whom the Inquisition at Rome has cast out: "In the history of the

[1] See Sabatier, *Du Renouveau Catholique.*

Church this singular paradox is always verified; that doctrinal crises have resulted the more peaceably, the broader their foundations have been; and that conversely the more grievous the schisms that have originated, the more the point in question was limited."[1] Modernism is not a schism, breaking off at a single point; it is laying broad foundations of religion in history, science and democracy.

As to their policies, they do not all have the same. Some have well-defined programmes. Others seek only "to disseminate their ideas among an intellectual *élite* of ecclesiastics and laics, to prepare opinions and to wait for the favorable time to see the reforms bring themselves to pass." Some are absorbed in social questions; others have their eyes upon the rights of science; still others are "deeply concerned with the moral aspirations and mysteries of the human soul." Some are occupied with the questions of Biblical criticism, and their weapons are mainly those of all modern historical students. Others again

[1] *Il Programma dei Modernisti*, etc., p. 126.

are concerned with the development of dogmas and the relations of faith to the modern mind. From this diversity their power is gathering from many quarters.

Varied as are their interests and their studies, the determination of the papacy to exterminate them all, unites them in a common cause. Their propaganda is much the same. From their different positions, they will continue the same common campaign. Their policy is to respect authority outwardly, so far as they can without yielding their own positions in reason and conscience, or abandoning Christian social reform. There they will not recant. They will keep on thinking, writing, reading, voting, working among the poor, and publishing their books. Their attitude in general resembles that of the early Puritans in England, so far as they have adopted a habit of passive resistance. They will not suffer the prohibitions of the Congregation of the Index to work as fast as the printing presses of the world may do in disseminating broadcast their views. As soon as one book

is forbidden, another seems ready to take its place. Fogazzaro's Saint did not prophesy things altogether remote when he said: "I see, in the future, Catholic laymen striving zealously for Christ and for truth, and finding a means of instituting unions different from those of the present";—which he describes as men banding together "for the united defence of God and of Christian morality in the scientific, artistic, civil, and social fields; for the united defence of legitimate liberty in the religious field."[1] Every severer measure of the Pope can only prove effectual in compacting the progressive Catholics in a closer comradeship. The result of the warfare upon them Father Tyrrell is sure will be to drive the two wings of the moderates together, and to gain for them the support of multitudes of Catholics. He says: "Should the repressive measures of the Encyclical be successfully carried out, it is to be feared that Modernism, to whose astounding energy, versatility and diffusion the Encyclical bears

[1] *The Saint*, p. 294.

witness, will be simply driven underground to the catacombs, there to grow and strengthen and organize itself against the not distant day when it shall be able to break forth again with gathered impulse. . . . In spite of sand barriers the tide will come in—not peaceably, but with dangerous rush."[1] The catacombs of "The Saint," it will be remembered, are a room, holding a considerable number of people, in a layman's house on a street in Rome.

The effect of the Papal policy in forcing scholars into open resistance to authority is illustrated in the recent removal of Professor Minocchi from his chair in a Catholic Institute in Florence. With the prior knowledge of his diocesan superior he had given a lecture on the first chapters of Genesis, in which he held that the narratives are not to be taken historically, but should be regarded as symbolic teachings of religous truths. A newspaper report of his lecture attracted attention, and forthwith the heavy hand of

[1] Letter to the London *Times*, Oct. 1, 1907.

authority was laid upon him. He was commanded to make a recantation of such views. In his reply he said that he was ready to admit whatever could be shown to be historically true, and, moreover, that he accepted, the Catholic theology concerning the origin of man's conscience and his sin. But he added this firm confession: "I will not hide from you that I have yet to understand this other riddle concerning this narrative in Genesis that, after so many decisive discoveries of the historical and anthropological sciences, such a categorical affirmation of the historicity of the Garden of Eden they wish to impose to-day upon me, an honest man and a scholar. Never, never will I make such base surrender of my Catholic conscience to scientific views which I know to be very false. Never will I offend God in denying the known truth in order to please men. And for this reason, as a Catholic, respectful to the will of authority, I bow myself to the decisions of my superiors, hardly concealing the joy of giving for God

and Christ, by this affirmation of conscience, testimony to the simple truth of Christianity."

An indication of the increasing disquietude of mind which the repressive policy of the Vatican is producing, may be seen in a touching account of an interview of a French Bishop with the Pope, which Sabatier says was related to him by the Bishop himself three days after it occurred. The aged Bishop with much frankness remonstrated with the Holy Father against the supplanting of Episcopal authority, by those who, speaking in the name of the Pope, seemed to forget the Divine institution of the Episcopate, and to "see in the Bishops only channels of transmission." He urged the Holy Father to convoke another Episcopal Assembly, and to leave it absolutely free to deal with all the questions before them with open doors, "so that all thoughtful and religious people in France and elsewhere should witness its serenity and independence, and the loftiness of its debates." He went home to find to his disappointment

that the Pope had decided to convoke no such general assembly.

As one result of the whole papal policy in France, Sabatier further informs us that "after some signs of discouragement the majority of the 'Green Cardinals' (as they are called) have again rallied together, satisfied that it is not the hour for sounding a retreat which has struck, but for resuming the burden of toil. . . . Feeling themselves profoundly Catholic, they mean to tell the Church calmly but resolutely what are their hopes and their needs." These French prelates who are moderates ask indeed for nothing extraordinary; but it is significant that they seem, according to this testimony, willing to assert their full canonical rights, to demand publicity of debate and trial, and above all to insist that "the domain of authority shall be strictly defined."[1]

A somewhat less hopeful view than Sabatier's is taken by Prof. Jean Réville in a survey of the situation of the churches in France.

[1] Letter to the London *Times*, August 12, 1907.

"Catholicism," he remarks, "may perhaps reform itself, but it can only be from the root, against Rome, and not with Rome. The Roman organization may burst asunder from an excess of centralization, but it is not possible to change it in a secular direction." He recalls the lesson that "the whole history of the church shows us that ever since the thirteenth century all reforms of the church have proceeded from the people or lower clergy"; and in France he fails to find enough real faith among the masses of the people for them to uphold a reform. It can, however, hardly be said that the leaders of the progressive Catholic movement are generals without troops. It seems rather to be true that in many places the people are waiting for the Saint and the Prophet.

We may quote once more Sabatier's judgment—perhaps no one who is not a Romanist, is more conversant with what is happening: "We are witnessing a crisis in the domain of authority. The Pope on the one hand, the Modernists on the other, are the

representatives of two mentalities, of two civilizations, confronting each other. Which of the two will prevail? To state the question is to answer it. Life and youth must necessarily prevail; and then will be fulfilled the prophecy of the venerable Abbot Joachim of Flora regarding the third age of humanity."

We have thus endeavored to gain some adequate conception of what Modernism in the Roman Church is, and what with a reasonable hope we may think it not impossible for it to do. The Pope, under a higher guidance perhaps than he may know, has chosen for his motto, "Restore all things in Christ." Could that be begun in deed and in truth in the Vatican, the hopes of the Modernists would be fulfilled, and the world might soon see the rise of a new Catholicism. But herein, so far as the Papacy is concerned, lies "the hopelessness of this hope."

The parish priest who lived and worked among the people of Venice with much of the love of the Son of man in his service, and who

held himself aloof from the politics of the Vatican, now that he has been transported to the chair of St. Peter, and is surrounded by the schemes and ambitions that gather in Rome from all other quarters of the Christian world, seems himself to have become one of the blind leaders of the blind; and there are many who will regard the Encyclical as very likely the last ditch into which the papal absolutism has fallen. Or was that Italian priest (who here must be nameless) right when he exclaimed: "The present Pope is a parenthesis!" Some parentheses of history have been long drawn out; but always God's sentence goes on to its full period. The present reaction of Pius X. is an interruption; Modernism runs in the main line of the thought and intent of Christian civilization. There may possibly be an anticipation of the charity of history in the more kindly judgment which some well-informed observers are disposed to take of Pius X. No doubt his deepest desires are evangelical; and, as so often has happened with God's servants, an

overruling providence may bring those desires to pass by the defeat of the measures which he has been led to take for their accomplishment under the influence of unwise councillors, less worthy than himself. The Gospel, which the Holy Father has at heart, may be set free by the convulsive effort of the Roman absolutism to prevent its own dissolution.[1] The first effort of the Vatican is to bring the Latin Church into subjection. On the one hand the teaching power of the Church is put forth in every possible way for the purpose of destroying the Modernist errors. Priests echo in the pulpits, and magazine and newspaper writers repeat in the press the words of the Encyclical with a dreary monotony of identical phrases. With the approbation of Cardinal Merry del Val a Catechism on the Encyclical has been published with questions and answers for the uninstructed, which remind one in form,

[1] Such is the view taken by Mr. Lilley in his preface to the translation of the *Programme of the Modernists*, p. xxiii.

if not in substance, of some Protestant catechisms which once children had to commit to memory. On the other hand, the writings of Modernists are followed with swift condemnation. A liberal Review, for instance, "Nova et Vetera," was issued at Rome on the tenth of last January; on the twenty-eighth of the same month, three days after the issue of the second number, it was followed by an edict of prohibition. The publishers announce that it will be continued. They say, "We appeal to the Church of to-morrow." Nor do the seminaries escape the eye of authority. A student was found with a copy of the forbidden reply of the Modernists in his possession, and immediately on that account he was expelled from the seminary, and sent home. Demands of recantation, removals of professors, and threatened penalties of excommunication are now frequently reported. Quiet scholars and devoted priests are thus forced in spite of themselves to become spirits of reform. The news agency of the Vatican is charged with

boycotting journals supposed to be favorably inclined to the Modernists. In short, the whole power of the Roman Curia seems to be exerted to enforce the deliverance of Pius X. on the opinions of the Modernists.

In Germany the storm has not yet broken forth as violently as in France and Italy; but premonitions of it have reached the universities. Removals of professors in several Catholic faculties have been agitated, and in some instances Catholic students have been forbidden to attend their lectures. But the attempt to subject education in the Universities to the dictation of the Vatican cannot be carried far without involving an issue with the State; and it remains to be seen whether the present diplomacy of the Holy See understands Germany any better than it has France.

What the present temper of many German Catholics is, may be judged by the following extracts from a letter of an aged German priest, which was originally written in Latin, and with the concurrence of several like-

minded priests and educated laymen sent to the Pope. Afterward a German translation of it found its way into print; and it has come to me from a reliable correspondent. The writer says:

"Although I am an old man, I have never in my life been so painfully touched by anything as by your Encyclical." He laments that the Pope has "treated theologians who are distinguished for piety and learning as though they were hostile to the Christian religion. Yet these men have no other intention than to restore all things in Christ, which is the very aim that you have set for yourself. Certainly they believe that they can better attain this end, if with proper consideration for the conditions of the times, they seek to some extent to defend the Christian religion with new weapons and by the employment of the prevalent knowledge of to-day. But efforts of that kind displease the advisers who stand at your side, who lack all understanding for what seems to be necessary and exceptional, in order to win the hearts of the

educated, and to compose or to modify that strife which in our time breaks out every day more harshly between the faith of revelation and human knowledge." The scholastic philosophy, which the Pope requires to be taught as the basis of all sound thinking, he characterizes as "antiquated, and as having to-day no weight among the educated as the ground or justification of the Christian religion."

"Do you not see," he asks, "how great is the difference between former times and ours? The times have changed. Hence the method of teaching is to be changed, if the enemies of the Christian religion are really to be turned back, and it be brought to pass that men of the modern times may feel themselves attracted to the Christian Catholic doctrine. In vain you trouble yourself to turn backward the wheel of time and to bring about a return to those times which to-day by all the educated are regarded, so to speak, as blind. Whoever does not keep pace with the times; whoever does not observe the signs of the times, will not be of the

slightest influence in preserving the cause of Christianity, as at present appears before our eyes in France. Especially should pains be taken that certain human fables, which in the course of the centuries have crept into the Christian religion, should not be given out as the doctrine of Christ."

"Do you not see in what a difficult position you put all our professors, who have to teach Catholic theology in the State Universities? Surely they will be despised by their colleagues in the other faculties; the finger of scorn will be pointed at them, as upon persons from whom there has been taken every free motion in the investigation of truth, and who at all times are surrounded by guardians, watchers and censors, whom you will have introduced. And how many and what great controversies will result therefrom between the Bishops and the teachers of theology? How many and great enmities between colleagues themselves? How greatly will the number increase not only of malicious calumniators, but also of hypocrites, who would

justify their own faith? For these reasons, believe me, not only many, and indeed the most learned among the clergy are enraged over these instructions, but also not a few among the laity, at least so far as they are to be counted among the educated. To these men it is odious that men who have to instruct the youth, should be put in so unworthy a position. Yes, many among the clergy and the laity will not be pleased with the manner in which you meet with commands our Bishops, who now seem to be no more successors of the Apostles, but rather slaves, who have to obey the word of the Apostolic See. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that others are vexed and indignant and cry out without any respect for your authority.

"As formerly the old Romans sent their legions to subjugate our forefathers, so now the Roman hierarchy send their Encyclicals to bring to submission the Bishops together with their dioceses.

"Consider well that the human spirit may

be repressed, but never for a lasting time crushed entirely, which is especially true of the Germans. For the more learned among us one is, so much the more is every kind of subjection hateful to him; and the longer our professors bear in silence a shameful subjection, so much the more vehemently some day will they break forth with one accord to regain their lost freedom."

The writer of this forcible protest concludes by saying, "I am willing, if the Holy Father desires it, to go to Rome, not to justify my writing—for it is God that justifies—but to explain further and more fully what seems to me most salutary, so far as Germany is concerned, for the government of our Church."

In America the warfare of the Vatican against the modern world has not as yet come to open hostilities. The same commands of Pius X., which have been issued to the rest of the Catholic world, have been laid upon the American Bishops. They are enjoined to exercise all vigilance in exterminating from American soil the seeds of these perni-

cious heresies. The Encyclical contains also an incidental thrust at "the principle of the Americans that the active virtues are more important than the passive." But up to the present time the American prelates, by their seeming acquiescence in the voice of authority, have shown their facility in the practice of the passive virtues rather than a disposition to exercise the active virtues in a conspicuous campaign against democracy and Modernism in this free country. If the Curia should compel the American Catholic Episcopate to lay the axe at the root of Modernism in the American Church; if the Holy Inquisition should once demand that search be diligently made for the sowers of it in every Catholic diocese and school in this country, no one could tell what forces now latent might be suddenly liberated, or predict what world-transforming results might ensue.

If we turn once more to Italy, where the conflict is now most closely joined, who are better prophets than these Italian priests who are willing to suffer for their be-

liefs? And this is what they say in reply to the Pope. We take these words from their book which had hardly been issued before the Roman Inquisition put it on the Index and threatened its authors with excommunication: "The movement of minds, in an age of intense and widely diffused culture such as ours, is not a slender stream which can easily be arrested by a dam; it is an irresistible tide, which authority should wisely direct, not foolishly obstruct." . . . Of the "anachronistic men who live in contact with the world without learning its aspirations, its language, its ideals," they say: "This part of the clergy who occupy almost all grades of the hierarchy, cannot prevent us, having received our scholastic education, from learning that language, and comprehending those ideals, from accomplishing the work of reconciliation and synthesis between the old Catholic tradition and the new thought and the new social aspirations."

A vivid impression of the present situation in Italy is conveyed in the following private

letter which has recently been received from an Italian priest of unusual intelligence, whose name I must refrain from giving for very much the same reason that led Sabatier to say, when asked about the names and numbers of his liberal Catholic correspondents, "It does not belong to me to aid Pius X. in policing his church."

This writer distinguishes between the more radical and the moderate Modernists. It will be observed that he also intimates to what the effect of the Pope's severity may lead.

"The (radically) modernist movement is fortunately not much diffused through Italy, and would probably not have gone so far had the necessity not been put upon it by the usual rough way in which the Vatican has behaved itself for some time. It is true that the evil existed, but it would not have assumed so serious and so pronounced a form had it been treated more gently. This piling up of orders and precepts, this condemning and suspending of priests, makes some react and go where they did not intend to at

first. It is a fact that the fear of Modernism has made many Bishops lose their heads so completely as to find Modernism even in the bicycle, which many have forbidden. This exaggeration, which in a large measure comes from the old-fashioned instruction given in the seminaries, has been to my mind the chief cause of so much rebellion. As I said to you before, in a conversation held in my garden, the Holy Father through his character and education knows nothing of diplomacy and appeasing flattery, and goes straight to his end without questioning whether around him there may not be a world which does not think precisely as it did in the Middle Ages, regarding the principle of authority. In the last analysis, in all Italy the rebellious Modernists may be counted on the tips of one's fingers; but it is a fact that there are thousands, myself among them, who while leaving intact the sacred heritage of faith and ancestral tradition in the things of faith, wish a reform in all the old rubbish which the centuries have heaped upon religion, old rub-

bish, which has nothing to do with faith. The young clergy wishes to live the life of its time, to be modern without being radical. I myself believe that, as always, from the evil a great good will come because between those who pull too far in one direction and those who pull too far in the other, those who stand in the middle finish in the right; and we are those who stand in the middle. The reactionaries have the power, but they have neither the youth nor the knowledge; so it is true that they are able to condemn, but not to confute.

"The situation then is more simple than may be imagined abroad. To me this struggle indicates the perpetual vitality of a faith which would be ended if it confined itself to a past, without being sure of its capability of adapting itself also to the present."

This last sentence strikes a note which resounds over and over again through the words of all the Modernists; it is this vital adaptation of faith to its modern environment which distinguishes the renewed Catholicism from that which is perishing in the Vatican.

III

COMING CATHOLICISM

I

MODERNISM in the Roman Church is but one-half of the whole providential movement now opening before us; the other half of it is to be observed in progressive Protestantism. The whole providence is to be looked for in the meeting of both of them. Each throws light upon the other; and, comparing the two, we may discern one higher purpose in them both.

We turn again, therefore, to our own horizons, to look for the signs of the dawn of the day after Protestantism. If we should close our account of the ages of the Reformation with the summary in the first chapter of its splendid successes and its apparent failures, we should be too unmindful of the abiding life which has manifested itself in it, and which shall not pass away. There are

prophecies and tongues of these Protestant years, which already have ceased; and whatever of Christianity it holds in part shall be done away; but, more than its faith and its hope, the greatest thing now in the Protestant world is its Love—and into that Protestantism itself shall pass when that which is perfect shall come.

If our Protestant Modernism is to be something more real than a new theology with its critical knowledge and its airy tolerance; if our hope of the unity of the Church in love is to become more than a prayerful dream; if our faith in the Universal Church is to be not a mere listening to dying echoes of Christ's prayer, but a resolute following of his living Voice; then we must be filled with a consuming zeal against the idols of our own theological and ecclesiastical making; and, with a humbled but renewed understanding, we should learn what are the elements and first principles of the oneness of the Church for which the Lord prayed, that the world might believe.

The rise of Roman Modernism brings a new challenge to the Protestant churches—what shall the same spirit work among us? If, on the one hand, Roman absolutism would crush the rising Catholicity of which the world in its unbeliefs has need, shall its light also be scattered among the divisions of Protestantism? If Romanism is a walled enclosure, shall Protestantism be like a conjuror's chamber of many mirrors, set at all angles, and so multiplied at every turn, that the visitor, once having entered, can find no way out; and, wherever he looks, beholds ever the reflection of his own passing form? Or shall the new Roman Catholicism find, when it comes, a Catholicism that has arisen from Protestantism, waiting to meet it and to match it? The question for our twentieth century Christianity is as broad as this; and no temporizing of ours with it will satisfy the providential insistence of it upon the conscience and the heart of the Christian world.

By this it is not meant that expedients of temporary union, or programmes of working

coöperation, may not have their present value, and hence their temporary justification; provided, however, they are not for a moment accepted as substitutes for the real unity of the Church. As means to that end they may be hopefully used; as ends in themselves they would be failures of the ideal of the Lord's prayer that all may be one. Federations of churches are to be regarded as at best only way-stations in the progress of the Church; the line of development of true Catholicity runs on and on, and our denominations are called to be through passengers. They shall not otherwise finish their course in faith.

Moreover, it cannot be too clearly recognized that the unity of the body of Christ is neither Church uniformity nor Church union; it is the wholeness of the Church. The first step, therefore, for all churches to take is to be true in thought to the fundamental oneness of Christ's Church.[1]

[1] The remarks of Bishop Brewster of Connecticut are here well worth quoting. "Unity means one-

Fidelity to that, above all other and lesser loyalties, is the supreme obedience for all Protestant churches to render. The oneness, the wholeness of Christ's Church—this is a truth not for our thought to play with, but a truth to be done with all our might.

Furthermore, the acknowledgment may well be made on all sides that downright earnestness has not as yet been shown in dealing with the overtures of unity which years ago were put forth in the so-called Chicago-Lambeth articles. They were discussed for a season; and with somewhat of an academic pleasure in the discussion on the part of those engaged in it; but they have failed to be taken in deed and in truth alike

ness; union is the binding together of things that are not one. . . . Union is outward, accidental and circumstantial. Unity is inward and essential. Union is mechanical; it is put together. Unity is vital; it is the oneness of a common life wherein the parts grow together. The endeavor after Christian Union may achieve Alliances and Federations. And still is perpetuated actual separation." *The Catholic Ideal of the Church*, p. 28.

by the body which proposed them, and among the denominations to which they were addressed. The Episcopal Church has not proceeded to conform her constitution to her overtures; and no denomination has sought to put them to the test of an actual trial.[1]

Nevertheless, one sign of Catholicity is now written large over the whole diversity of Protestant denominationalism;—it is the universal desire for Christian unity. This is in the air; it has become an irrepressible idea in the mind of every church. But Catholicity is not in itself Catholicism. Catholicity is a temper of mind, a quality of spirit; Catholicism is a manifestation of it in some evident form, a spirit clothed upon with some body. The spirit of Catholicity, rising from the death of sectarianism, will not be made perfect until it shall appear in some embodiment, finer, indeed, and more free, so evidently fashioned of the spiritual elements,

[1] See *The Peace of the Church*, by Dr. W. R. Huntington, p. 231 *sq.* A beginning in this direction was made at the last Episcopal General Convention.

and so luminous with Love, and yet so visible wherever disciples are met together, that in its presence the glory of Christ may be made manifest, even as He prayed.

We shall miss altogether the point of departure for further advance toward Church unity, if we proceed from the separation of the Christian denominations, as though that were the fundamental fact, or the only actual state of Christianity. On the contrary, our separations are the superficial appearance, not the underlying fact. We have not to go far beneath the surface of present-day Protestantism; we need only to remove the easily detached soil in which our several Church organizations are planted—the good soil, it may be, enriched by years of cultivation, and still sustaining growths of rich fruitfulness;—we have but to strike down beneath the surface facts to the underlying rock, to discover that, after all is said, the oneness of Christianity is the primary, indestructible fact upon which rest alike the soil, and fenced enclosures, and all fruitful trees and

ripening harvests. The underlying unity has existed, and does exist, as really, although not as visibly, as our differences exist.

Our discussion of the problems of the union of the churches should start from the fact that the Church *is* Catholic; that, as the primary fact, there is one Catholic Church throughout the world. The real problem given us in our day to work out is, not to create that unity, but to manifest it; not to make it anew out of the destruction of our individual inheritances, but to make it manifest as the one Life through all the forms and organs of it. Our problem, in a word, is the visibility of Church unity. Hence, our logic will revolve in a vain circle, if the first premise of our reasoning be not this primary Church-fact of the actual unity of Christ's society; and our endeavor will be stopped before insurmountable barriers, if it does not begin from this starting point of Christian faith that we all do belong to the one Church of Christ.

Nor shall we do justice to the historic and continuous fact of the one society of Jesus with His disciples from the beginning until now, if we are satisfied with a dim perception of that unity as an impalpable characteristic of the Church invisible, and remain content to hold the two churches sharply distinguished in our thought—the one visible, the other invisible; the one divided, the other catholic. This is not true to the living actuality. Membership in the one Church is not the privilege only of the blessed, nor is its unity as invisible as are the spirits of the dead; we belong here and now to Christ's one Church; and though now that falls far short of its perfect manifestation, nevertheless it is at least as visible as is the baptismal sign of it. Rome itself acknowledges us all as belonging to this visible Christianity, when it recognizes the validity of Christian baptism by whatever hands of priest, or layman, or nurse it may be given. And Father Tyrrell is profoundly true to the primary fact of Christianity when he writes, not of

the invisible Church merely, but of the "formless church which underlies the hierarchic constitution." It is real though formless; in it is life, though the life within it may not depend on any existing organ it possesses. It exercises authority; God's spirit in it "exercises a silent but sovereign criticism"; it has vital energy adapting itself with inexhaustible grace to the ever-changing demands of its environment in human thought and life; it is this Church, all too formless, we may think, yet always in the world, from which our successive religious organizations have developed, and the deathless life of which is made manifest through them all.

If we begin with a clear recognition of the existence of the one Society of Christ on the earth, we shall already stand on higher ground, which commands our lower divisions. The reason for hopefulness is not merely that there is growing among us a common Christian consciousness; that out in the open, as it were, we are breathing the

same air, and walking in the same Light from above. Nor is it simply our impatience with confessional restrictions, or our longing for some one organization large enough to hold us all. It is something simpler, and at the same time nobler, than this. It is the enthronement of the idea of the Christian Society. It is in many quarters the recovery of the idea of the one historic Christian Society; and in other quarters, where that idea has not been kept in the background, it is the freeing it from externalities and forms unessential to it. It is a return to the simplicity of it as it was in the beginning, and it is an advance, likewise, toward the complete Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The original, the historic, the Universal Church is constituted in personal relations. Christ with Peter, the confessor, began the Christian Society. The Church was founded in a personal and vital relation; not upon the confession, nor upon the individual man was

the Church built; it was the man in his confession of the Christ, who was recognized by the Master as the beginner with Him of the fellowship which, once having begun, should never be destroyed. In this confessed and vital personal relationship the foundation of the Church was laid. In the same manner also was it continued. Organized in no formal association, but in a living friendship; continued in the obedience not of servants, but of friends; the Church was wherever Jesus Himself was in the midst of His disciples. It went with Him through Judea and Galilee, and it was with Him in the upper chamber, and it has been and is to be manifested henceforth in a sacred and perpetual visibility in the Lord's Supper. Wherever the eleven went, and men and women met and brake bread in the Master's name, the Society of Christ was visibly continued; others had fellowship with them, as we read in St. John's epistle—the fellowship in the Life which was manifested. And so it has remained unto this day. This unbroken

line of personal continuity, this oneness of the whole succession of Christian confessors, is the historic reality which the Church represents and confirms.

If we draw near together in this primary Church idea; if all together we find firm footing upon the one Church-fact; we shall have gained the first principle, we shall have taken the first and decisive step in the way toward a reunited Protestantism. Standing in this position, we shall discover more clearly the difference between that which is primary, and those things which are secondary, in the development of Christian life and organization. Having laid hold of the first elements of the living unity of the Church, we shall suffer them no more to be obscured, or confounded in the secondary processes of its historic development, or any of its successive adaptations to the conditions of its life. Nothing is more important for a real synthesis of seeming opposites of religious ideas than to come to just this knowledge of what is primary, and what lies altogether

along the secondary line of the problems given us providentially to work out. The controversy over the episcopate may thus be put in the way of settlement, if our divisions over it are found to lie along the secondary and not primary line of our common faith.

A biological analogy may aid us in determining the natural relation of orders of the ministry to the organic life of the Church. Life begins with a single cell. For the perpetuation of life it is not necessary that different organs should be developed; an organic cell needs neither head nor nerve-centre, nor separated functions except of the most rudimentary kind, in order that its life may be preserved and passed on from one generation to another. The potencies of distinct organs, capable in time of complex and stable differentiations, may indeed be determined in the first germ and vitality of it; but no one of the later developed characteristics of it are essential to its continued life. We might say that the life is in the

whole of it, rather than dependent on any part of it, and that in response to its environment increasing distinctions within it are determined by the life of the organism as a whole. They proceed from it, they serve it, they continue its life, while they derive their vitality from it.

Now the orders of the ministry in the Church concerning which so much controversy has been waged, resemble the organs of a body. The biological analogy has point in so far as it may serve to disabuse us of the notion that any organic orders are primary, and, from the beginning of life in the germ, necessary to the existence of the Church. The analogy might be carried further to show how a certain interchangeableness of their functions might have been natural in the earlier stages of the developing Church during the last years of the first century. Differentiated orders of ministry, however, which are not necessary to the existence, may in time become indispensable to the continuance of the Church. Thus

historians are agreed that the episcopate in the second century was a providential means of preserving the true tradition and doctrine of the Church. Moreover, it holds true that if, like an organ, some one order of the ministry had been cut off, another might have taken up its function, or it might have been regenerated anew from the life of the Christian Society. There are examples of regeneration of parts in earlier stages, and later even of substitution of functions—one part doing somewhat the work of another part—in organic development. So likewise in the history of the Church differences of its administration may be functions of its life; distinct orders of ministry may acquire specific characters for its use; but they are not the life; they are aids to its growth and fruits of its life; but the Church has life in itself.

Primarily and essentially it is the permanent immanence of the Spirit of life in the Church which preserves the historic unity of it. The forms and orders by means of which its unity has been made visible, are

of importance; they may be held to be divinely ordained, as its whole growth is; but they are of secondary institution. They may be accepted as facts in a providential order of development by those who could not admit the historical theory of a direct institution of them by Christ or the Apostles.[1] To require that would be to enforce in the field of Church history a theory of development which has been discarded in the field of natural science. The assumption that the Papacy, or any differentiated order, was originally created by Christ, or that whole systems of mediæval dogmas were deposited in Apostolic words, is unjustified by historical investigations.

[1] This position is granted by the Bishop of Carlisle, who speaks for many Christians besides himself in these words: "However dearly we prize the historic succession of the episcopate, can we reasonably maintain that it is indispensable to the validity of the Word and sacraments?" "Its [the Church's] unity must be the unity of living, loving personal relationship."—*Hibbert Journal*, January, 1908. Other churches might adopt as expedient what is not claimed as indispensable.

A simple supposition will serve to bring out clearly the truth that the organic continuity of the Church is thus guaranteed in the life of the organism itself, and is not necessarily dependent upon any organs or orders for its development. It is not difficult to imagine that in the most wide-spread of the early persecutions of the Christians, in the days of Diocletian, every vestige of episcopacy might have been destroyed; as the emperors of that period in the inscriptions, commemorative of their triumph, declared that the name of Christian was destroyed. Suppose that in Rome not only were the successors of the Apostles Peter and Paul put to death, but all the presbyters and deacons likewise of the church at Rome; expand the supposition until it embraces all quarters of the known world to which the edicts decreeing the destruction of the Christians, who would overthrow the republic, were sent; conceive that the boast of the Emperor was literally fulfilled in every city where Christians were consumed by slow

fire, as at Antioch; and through all the remote provinces also, as in Phrygia a whole Christian town was surrounded, as Eusebius states, by a cordon of armed men, then set on fire, and all the inhabitants were forced to burn; imagine that as a result of such universal desolation not a solitary officer of the church, upon whom consecrating hands had been laid, could have been found left in the Roman Empire:—would then the triumph of the Emperors over the Christ have been final? Would subsequent history have justified their boast, "The Christian superstition is everywhere destroyed"? Did the life of the Church depend upon keeping unbroken any tangible chain of Apostolic succession? or of any order of Presbyters? Could the historic unity of the Church of God in any age be destroyed by the persecutor's sword? Would the Spirit of the ascended and expectant Christ have lost all recreative power in humanity because one line or another of the communication of its energy might have been interrupted? So

long as anywhere in that whole Roman world two or three were left to meet together in the name of the Lord, the Church visible would have remained on the earth, in its own vital faith and in the presence of the Christ in the midst of them possessing His authority, and the fulness likewise of spiritual energy for the reorganization of its life, and the manifestation of His love unto the end. If we could suppose that to-day by some visitation like that which fell upon the first-born in Egypt all ecclesiastical orders should perish together—bishops, presbyters, priests,—and the Pope himself should be dead with none left for his successor; the Gospel would not perish from the earth, the Church would not be buried in the sepulchre of its ministry.[1] The whole magnetic field of Christianity would not be left empty of spiritual energies merely because all the connecting wires for a brief hour might be down. It were easier rather to imagine that from such supposed violence of destruction throughout the

[1] So also Huntington, *Opus cit.*, p. 194.

Church, a Christian Society might rise again, with its divisions become only memories of its past, and its inexhaustible life clothed upon with a body more celestial. And to it again, as One of old appeared on the mountain to that first body of disciples, would come the Voice, saying, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." And they who might be left could still claim his promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Furthermore, a vast deal for the working out in practice among Protestants of the idea of Church unity will have been gained, if we shall come to mutual recognition of this primary principle of Catholicism. For if we stand together here we shall discover that we are already on a plane above many obstacles to Church unity which lower down seemed insurmountable. We have been like mountain climbers who start from different points to reach the height. Their separate trails through the thickets at the mountain's foot lead them sometimes near

each other, but oftener far apart. The foothills rise at times between them; at moments they may catch glimpses of one another through the opening undergrowth, or call to each other as higher up in some clear space they stand on opposite sides of a deep ravine. Only, as they climb, the ravines become less deep, the streams, nearer their mountain springs, are easy to step across. All the way up they have had different views, and many outlooks at resting points on the ascent they can never forget. But at the mountain-top all lesser heights and the deep fissures are below them, and their many partial views are blended in the one broad prospect away to the horizon line, which together they behold. Our church separations are all lower down. The Christ was the first to stand alone as upon the mountain-top; and looking down toward those who should follow after him, and gazing up into the glory of the heavens, he prayed to the Father of all that they may be one even as we are one. The company of the Apostles

first followed him to the height, and theirs was one faith and hope. If our churches would be in their succession, they must leave their divisive dogmas and their partial views beneath them.

Differences which we have too easily looked upon as necessary and fundamental, we may learn are only historical and developmental. The same spiritual evolution which has occasioned, and at different times profited by, theological controversies, may also pass through them and lead to something better beyond them; possibly by slight variations in the forms or specific characters of existing ecclesiastical systems a higher realization of Christian faith and love may be developed.

It is noteworthy in this connection that the Lambeth articles of Church reconciliation do not confound the distinction between the primary and the secondary line of beliefs, upon which we have just been insisting. The fourth proposition which the Lambeth articles lay down as a possible basis for

unity, does not make the continuity of the Church depend upon the tenuous thread of an Apostolic succession—a thread which has, it must be generally admitted, some questionable knots in it. This overture asks simply and broadly for recognition of the historic episcopate, and that, moreover, as it may be freely adapted to different conditions. One may accept this and believe, if he has been wont so to believe, in an unbroken tactical transmission of authority from Peter to the last ordained priest to be seen among men. Or another may accept it without hanging his faith upon any theory of external transmission of grace, contented to stand on the broad, Church fact—that of the one unbroken Christian Society, which the Lord owns everywhere by the fruits of his Spirit. Still another, with but slight changes in his habits, might conform to the polity of the episcopate, while remaining a Congregationalist in his valuation of the functional independence of the local church. Nor is ritual uniformity rendered necessary by it. A con-

formity is not desirable, which, if enforced, would compel a new non-conformity.

The writer of the Pope's Encyclical had perhaps a truer insight than he knew when he saw that the Modernist may have many personalities in one. This can be, because many differences are reconciled in his inner experience of the Christ who draws all men unto himself. He can find harmony in diversities of doctrine and worship because his religion is within him a growing experience of the love of God for all men. He will learn ever new occasions for the Master's word to his zealous disciples, "He that is not against us is for us." For this reason, because he has in himself the gospel of reconciliation, he will cease to be at heart a Churchman, a Denominationalist, or a believer known and designated to himself by any other adjective than Christian, unless indeed it be the word, Catholic. Whether he be in the Roman or any Protestant communion, he would restore that word, Catholic, to its original meaning. And in all possible

forms of fellowship he would help make the true meaning of that word visible.

A right order of faith was followed in the confession of a former Scotch divine, "I am first a Christian, next a Catholic, then a Calvinist, fourthly a Pædo-Baptist, and fifthly a Presbyterian."

It is not necessary to our purpose to enter into the discussion of the secondary separations now existing between Protestant churches, such as differences which may be deemed of importance concerning the sacraments, or the doctrines of faith. But we will not pass by without notice one practical cause of sectarian confusion, which may prove to be almost the last obstacle to a more united Christianity. This is a difference, as it is sometimes characterized, between mentalities; a difference which occasions many intellectual and temperamental divisions. Here it should not be forgotten that a visible unity of the Church would by no means require uniformity. It is a very light way of dismissing the urgent problem of Church

unity by observing that uniformity is neither practicable nor desirable. An irrepressible question of Church history is not to be solved by a wave of an academic hand. Catholicism, in the earnest endeavor to make itself a visible reality for the salvation of the faith of the modern world, does not dream of demanding uniformity; should it seek to enforce that, it could become only another Roman Catholicism. Not thus can there be one flock in Christ's many folds.

Passing by various minor temperamental differences, more easily adjusted, and always to be tolerated, we must recognize one radical difference of views which runs through the whole thought of modern times. It may be described in a word as the difference between the static and the dynamic conception of everything. Just this is a fundamental fissure between the Papacy and Modernism. It is like the difference between a house made by hands and a tree that has grown. In the view of Pius X. the Roman Church was made by Jesus Christ himself, or built up

at once by his Apostles on the lines which he had prescribed. The after-ages have to live in it, and to keep it always the same. It contains the deposit of faith, of which the Pope is the divinely appointed custodian. To the Modernists the Church is the vine, the life of which is Christ, and the branches of which the succeeding ages bring forth. Fogazzaro's Saint loves to say that the vine can ever renew itself, that its life cannot die.

A similar mental diversity, although not so marked in degree, is to be observed in the course of many discussions among Protestants concerning the Church. But is any intellectual divergence among Protestants necessarily a practical obstacle to the reunion of the Churches? Are not many of our differences purely mental difficulties which rise up as mountains in our conceptions of truth, but which faith may easily remove as having no reality?

It would seem to be answer enough to say that the love of Christ in the heart goes beneath all structural diversities in the intel-

lects of men. And with regard to the particular point just under consideration—the article concerning the historic episcopate—there are no differences in men's thoughts of it, which are valid as reasons in love for their standing apart on account of it. In this, and in other matters of forms and ordinances, believers who hold quite different theories might find on the broad facts of Christian history common standing-ground. That which philosophy has put asunder, life may join together.

From this cursory observation of outstanding difficulties, we return to our starting-point; our most vexed problems in the effort to reach Church unity are not to be found either in the depths of the Christian consciousness, or on the heights of the Christian ideals; they meet us and trouble us only on the plain of our habits, conventions, practices; they are therefore removable. We can put them aside, if we will. They are secondary, however important they may seem; they are not primary; they are actual,

but not real; sentimental, but not fundamental; mental, but not vital.

Episcopacy holds the key to the door through which other churches may be invited to enter into a catholicism large enough to hold them all. But the door to the Father's house wherein all denominations may sit down together, must be opened wide, and the archway lifted high, so that no church need stoop to enter in. There are lesser fidelities of the several denominations which they owe to themselves and their own history, which are to be respected in the invitation to the larger loyalty of the Universal Church. The clergy of any church, whose ministry for generations past has been owned of the Spirit by its fruits, should not be asked to dishonor their fathers or to disown their own ordination vows, in order that in the love of unity they may receive a further episcopal consecration. Other congregations should not be expected to forget their habits of unwritten prayer, endeared

by many sacred memories while they may be ready to unite in liturgies which have been hallowed by the years. No denomination need be asked to forsake utterly its own rich inheritance from the past, as it may seek with all the saints to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. All the churches should be invited to bring with them their ancestral treasures into the one household of faith; and they should find space to hang the portraits of their most honored fathers and teachers, among those of other consecrated servants of God, on the walls of the refectory where all they who are called Christian may again break bread together with gladness and in singleness of heart.

The Episcopal Church, by virtue of its tradition and position, has, as no other, I am venturing to say, the opportunity and the call to become the mediating Church among all the churches. How it shall heed this call, in what definite and practical ways it may be guided to meet this opportunity, seems to be

the first and immediate question of protestant reunion. Others must wait for its answer.

We would not, in saying this, forget that the Lambeth overture may still be regarded as a standing offer of reconciliation from the Bishops of the English Church. But it was in 1888 that this offer was made, and it has been suffered to drop out of sight. Some interchange of fraternal greetings then occurred as a consequence of it; but nothing was done. In this country, perhaps more than in any other land, the conditions are favorable for active endeavors for this end. Without discourtesy the wish might be expressed that the American Episcopate might find means to put the Lambeth Quadrilateral, or some new overture, so directly before the eyes of other Christian bodies that responsibility for neglecting it would lie upon their conscience. Shall the proposition of the Lambeth articles, which made a good beginning, mark the end of the mediation of the Episcopal Church in America in behalf of the reunion of the churches?

Meanwhile, any efforts are to be encouraged which may put a stop, even in slight degree, to the fearful economic waste of competing ecclesiastical organizations. In view of the world-wide opportunities for the gospel of service, this waste of the resources of Christianity seems sinful. How can it ever be justified when the Householder returns to ask an account of his stewards? It is keeping the pound given to the Church laid up in an ecclesiastical napkin; it is not putting it into the bank of the world's exchange to gain ten pounds.

The further practical suggestion may be offered that tentative efforts for the realization of the idea of Church unity may be made, not only through public discussion of the problems of possible combinations of Church efforts or interests, but also by private conferences and clubs of representatives of different churches, and, as a result eventually, by successive conferences between official committees of leading denominations for this purpose. The churches can be doers of

this truth of Church unity, if they will to do it. One of the declarations of the Bishops, when they put forward the Chicago-Lambeth olive branch, might well be adopted over and over again in the councils and assemblies of the different Churches; the expression, namely, of a readiness "to enter into brotherly conference with all or any Christian bodies seeking the restoration of the organic Unity of the Church, with a view to the earnest study of the conditions under which so priceless a blessing might happily be brought to pass."

To all Christian bodies now Richard Baxter's pathetic lament in his "Penitent Confession" might be addressed: "O how little would it have cost your Churchmen in 1660 and 1661 to have prevented the calamitous and dangerous Divisions of this Land, and our common danger thereby, and the hurt that many hundred thousand souls have received by it? And how little would it cost them yet to prevent the continuance of it?" Not as a vain, penitential regret, but as a

call to action, may the question come home, "How little would it cost us now to prevent the continuance of it?"

It is a happy omen that in some ways the practice of the truth of Church unity is becoming prevalent. Evidence of this is to be seen along the advancing missionary line. Old soldiers know too well how demoralizing it was when a regiment at the front was mistakenly fired upon by a regiment under the same flag from behind. Fewer such tragic mistakes are now to be witnessed among religious bodies of firing upon one another from behind. Moreover, in our cities, we are beginning to learn the tactical folly of misplaced churches and unconsolidated forces. And at least we may set our faces against tendencies to strengthen any denominational system for the sake of its separate welfare and pride.

Meagre though the results of such endeavors may seem at first in comparison with the end to be attained, nevertheless in so doing we shall not be merely marking time;

is it now too much to affirm that by such beginnings, and in the further use of all available means, an inter-denominationalism is making itself ready to greet the promise of a grander Church unity? Eventually may Episcopacy be led by the Spirit to suffer it to come to its own among us all!

It may seem less gracious to mention tendencies which are diversions or arrests of the general movement toward the reunion of the Churches. But some by-ways have already been pursued full far enough to show that they do not promise to return farther on into the highway. For example, Church unity is not to be attained by following some among the Anglicans, who would find a way around the Papacy back to the conditions of faith which were left finished and fixed by the first Ecumenical Councils prior to the separation between the Eastern and Western Churches. Such Churchmen remind one of Dante's mistaken prophets, who were doomed to walk with their heads reversed on their bodies, so that, when they would go

forward, their eyes could see only what lay behind them. To be pro-Roman is not to be pro-Catholic.

Neither can the desired end of Christian unity be gained by a Congregationalism that would protect its own life by excreting a new ecclesiastical shell, larger indeed, but harder than the old, enclosing itself in a system of standing councils, executive committees, general superintendents, moderators enduring for a while—extemporized bishops clothed with a little brief authority, but without halo of traditional reverence. Still less can the way toward the City of God, the gates of which are never shut, be pursued much farther by a Presbyterianism that would compel its teachers to dwell within its confessional walls, allowing them indeed to go out into adjacent fields for their days' work with other scholars, but expecting them to return every night to rest safely within the gates. Least of all can the end in the unity of truth and love be reached by a pathless pursuit of liberty and fraternity

through the economic tangle and into the socialistic swamp, sustained by a natural love of humanity, and led hither and thither by an ethical impulse in which the Golden Rule is owned, and the Lord's Prayer is forgotten.

Since such ways as those just mentioned are proving to be by-ways, which do not come together, the question returns, How, then, can a way through the bewilderment of the creeds of Christendom be found? These Modernists are learning an answer for us all. Protestantism may find itself more indebted than we know to those Roman Catholic thinkers and historians for the answer which they have been compelled to discover in order to save the loyalties of their own faith. It is given in their principle of the historical development of the dogmas of the Church. That truth is in all their thoughts; and it keeps them within their Church, while it emancipates them from all bondage to its traditions. Concisely stated, it is the truth that the dogmas of the Church are successive developments of the reflective life of the

Church. And they may be fruits fresh every season. Creeds are not to be acknowledged as contracts between believers; they are to be received as the garnered stores of past religious experience for the use of the living mind of the Church. The creeds of Christendom are not mere repetitions, they are necessary growths of the Christian faith. Dogmas are symbols, interpretations, from time to time men's best appreciations of the truth. They are true as they bear witness to the true Christian life in the language of each age. And it is the orthodoxy not of a single creed, or of a finished formula, but the truth of all Christian creeds which the one Catholic Church rejoices to own. This has been historically, and it must be always, a continuous, yet a changing orthodoxy, because it is a growing confession of the faith which is ever springing up anew from the life of the Christ with men. Take any creed as a closed formula, and such creed would be but as the cerement of faith. Confess any Christian creed as a symbol of the truth, and it becomes an ex-

pression of fellowship with the whole thought of the Church as it knows, and follows on to know the Lord.

Accepting this principle of the vital development of dogmas, we can throw away the idea of a creed in which it is regarded as though it were like a rubber band, which may be so stretched that it will hold almost everything, or become with age so hard that it can bind nothing. Rather the doctrinal formulas resemble the pearls and jewels of diverse colors which are strung together on the same unbroken thread; or better, since nothing in religion is to be mechanically conceived, for us to confess the creeds as true growths of the same Christian faith and life is only to perceive that a tree must have bark, and that the bark must grow with the tree. In short, for our argument must not linger at this point, apply without hesitation the first principles of organic evolution to the development of the Church and its dogmas, and you will have secured both the integrity and historical continuity of its life, and at

the same time the progress and ever renewed adaptations of it to the knowledge and life of the world.

What is directly to the point here is that this principle of the Roman Catholic modernists gives back to Protestants a key to the solution of their problem of unity amid doctrinal diversities. It seems providential that Roman Catholic theologians, in their imprisonment within bolted doors, behind iron bars of authority, such as Protestantism in its strictest dogmas has never known, have found a key which may open all doors of creedal bondage;—a skeleton key, indeed, for the principle just mentioned is simple, but it will open the doors of many doctrinal separations. Our scholars and historians are using the same principle. This key fits easily our history and thought. But now that these Roman Catholics are putting it into our hands again, if Protestants will take up this first principle of the historical development of dogmas, and think it out fully, and follow it all through their own doctrinal

difficulties and dissensions, they will find a way—not indeed out into a homeless creedlessness—but on into the unity of the household of faith; and then, like the Psalmist of old, they may sing because they are delivered from their doctrinal distresses and set in a large place by the Lord.[1]

Living among men in the love of the Son of man as the servant of all; obedient in every thought to the truth that makes free, possessing as its own the fulness of its creeds, and ever following on to know the Lord; praying always that with all the saints it may be strong to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge;—such more visibly shall be the One Catholic Church, seeing which the world might believe.

Shall men behold it in our day? Is this practicable? How shall it come to pass?

[1] For a helpful historical exposition of the principle of development of dogmas, the reader may be referred to the Abbé Loisy's book, "The Gospel and the Church," which is one of the best replies to Harnack's attempt to extract from history a single Gospel truth as the essence of Christianity.

Even at the present time it is hardly a too venturesome assertion to make that from the larger religious communions in this country it would not be difficult to find leading representatives in each, thoroughly loyal to their own inheritance, who, if two or three of them could meet together, each with power to act for his own body, would find it quite possible to agree upon fundamental articles of unity; and after that nothing but conventions, expedients, and secondary affiliations would be left to be worked out naturally in time.

The mere suggestion, just ventured, that it is conceivable how representative thinkers in different churches might find a common meeting ground of their ideas of the Church, is of itself reason enough to believe that in this hope of the reunion of the churches we are not "coquetting with the impossible." Among the laity a great, underlying sentiment is prevailing, to which the leaders, when they appear, will not make a vain appeal. The patriotism of the better country awaits

the providential call, as the guns of Fort Sumter awoke the patriotism of the Union.

The time, men are saying, seems ripe for something. There are many that say, Lo here! Lo there! and among these, socialism loudest of all. But to socialism the keys of the kingdom of heaven on earth are not given. To the real Christ all authority is given. In some more visible embodiment of His Spirit, in such new Catholicism, these Protestant ages by His further coming, shall not be destroyed but fulfilled.

II

The reunion of the Protestant churches would be the completion of but one column only of the triumphal arch of the one true Church. The other column stands apart—the Roman Church—its base, as it claims, the rock on which the church is founded, built of the memorial stones of the ages, unshaken in its massive proportions. Shall the two columns remain forever apart? Rather

has it not already come to the point where on either side may be discerned the beginning of the curve, which, when carried up to completion, shall make the one perfect arch?

With the prospect before us of a better affiliation of the Protestant churches, we look with a greater interest at the providential possibilities of reform within the Roman Catholic Church. Recalling what we have already observed concerning the renovating energies of Modernism, we are now concerned with the further inquiry, What, if we suppose its work to be successfully carried out in time, will a reformed Romanism bring to Protestantism? Will it offer anything that Protestantism can grasp? As a consequence, will any closer relation or practical coöperation be made possible between them? The saying has been sometimes repeated, "I believe in the Roman Catholic Church as it shall be a thousand years from now"; if Modernism prevails, shall we be able to say, "I believe in the

Universal Church which is coming, and now is in the world"?

To most this may seem a hard saying and a romantic faith. But history is swiftly made now. By the modern mastery of forces, mountains which cannot be removed, are tunnelled through. It is not impossible to faith to believe that ways of commerce may be opened even through seemingly impassable religious separations. And they are not to be put aside as visionaries, who, having themselves overcome some Protestant fears, believe that other separative misunderstandings in time also may be overcome.

Generally the old-time cry, "No Popery," is now regarded as superfluous. To fill our Protestant trumpets with that sound would be a vain call to a civil strife against imaginary foes. Nor do we find in our hymnals the words which at the close of the seventeenth century were sung year by year in every Evangelical congregation in Germany,

"Defend us by Thy word, O Lord,
From Pope and Paynim's murderous sword."

We on our part may well drop past controversies, while we stop to listen to this appeal to us of a French Catholic: "O sons and heritors of the Reformers of the sixteenth century! You see beginning in this Church of Rome, which condemned your fathers without listening to them—you see beginning, I repeat, a religious struggle, better informed and more radical than that of Wickliffe, of John Huss, of Luther, and of Calvin. Great is the sorrow and distress of us who see crushing down upon us the ancient and venerable dome under which we had believed we might safely remain. For you, who have never considered Rome as the whole Church and have held her action to be often only a tyrannical oppression—for you there is nothing surprising in our destruction, our sufferings, and the struggles which we must encounter. Your fathers and you, even you, have known the same vicissitudes, and in the sweat of your brow and the tears of your heart have reconstructed for yourselves religious shelters

where you live in peace and full of energy for the service of God and of humanity. In our present anguish your experience remains our encouragement and our hope."[1]

We should return a hard answer to such an appeal, should we say with self-satisfied ease, "Come and dwell with us in any of our many pleasant shelters." Protestantism would play again the rôle of the tempter, should it offer the kingdoms of its world to the Truth that would return in the power of the Spirit to its own Galilee. But Modern Catholicism does appeal to Modern Protestantism, for appreciation, for sympathy now, and for readiness for whatever affiliation may hereafter become possible.

Conjectures, only thrown out as to the probabilities of the future, may serve to give some definiteness to our thought concerning the ways of approach of this greatest reconciliation of all. The writings and tendencies of the neo-Catholics leave with us materials

[1] Houtin, *The Crisis in the Catholic Church. Fourth Int. Cong.*

from which such imaginations may be easily drawn.

In the theological tendencies of the Modernists there are already indicated some lines of closer approach—they may seem like the dotted lines on the map of a railway not yet built, but a conjectural line may afterward become an accomplished work of engineering. Such possibilities are before us in the views of dogma to which we have just referred. For they show a better way than logic by which unity amid much diversity of beliefs may be reached. By the logical method agreement can be gained only by the exclusion of incompatible ideas. In the developmental way, logical incompatibles may be assimilated in the collective life, the living, working unity of the Church;—only that which is destructive of the body being cast out. Institutes of theology, however valuable, must be separative constructions; developments of theology, adapted to growth and vital needs, may become organic harmonies. The true symbol for Christian

theology is not to be found in the Old Testament, but in the New. It is not like the ark of the law, to be guarded by a perpetual priesthood, as a sacred deposit which no man may touch; rather the symbol of Christian theology may be drawn from the river of the water of life, in the midst of the street, where the thoughts of all the nations walk in the light of the City of God.

Father Tyrrell may reassure us that the neo-Catholic theology eventually may not prove uninhabitable for children of Protestant descent, when he says of Modernism: "It does not demand a new theology or no theology at all; but a moving, growing theology—it does not demand a new intellectual framework of Catholicism, or no framework at all; but a recognition that the framework has grown in the past and should be suffered to grow in the future under the guidance of the same life and Spirit."

We on our part may hear something more than a visionary's voice in this conclusion of this Modernist: "Taught by history, God's

great logic mill, which has worked out both these sixteenth-century solutions, the solution of unfettered authority, and the solution of unfettered liberty to their impossible results, he (the Modernist) will see the necessity of going back to the point of divergence . . . whether, in the light of three centuries of necessary but costly experience, the problem of liberty and authority may not now admit of some happier solution, and on the ruins of two opposing systems be built up something more durable than either."

In a recent lecture on Catholicism and Protestantism in Germany that preëminent historian, Prof. Adolf Harnack, laments the fact that the German people up to the present time remain divided into two camps, and that this condition complicates all relations and heaps up everywhere hindrances and obstacles. Then with a noble impatience he asks: "Are we obliged to regard this condition as settled and to acquiesce in it? The question is so seldom raised among us that it seems thereby already to be decided.

Nearer approach of the confessions (Protestant and Catholic) passes with most of us as an Utopia, to think of which is not worth while, but is, indeed, a betrayal almost of one's own confession. But, on the other hand, though only a glimmer of possibility and hope of improvement is here at hand, yet it is seen that it would be conscienceless to neglect it. . . . Slackness is it, religious and theological slackness, to refuse this question off-hand, or to thrust it aside."

Moreover, the renovation of Roman Catholicism by the modern spirit would bring it into more acceptable relations to our modes of thought in regard to its forms of worship and the sacraments. The critical, historical spirit has already accomplished something to drive away the superstitions which swarm around sacred places and relics. But it goes further and will restore in Christ the simplicity which has been overlaid in forms of worship that are too externalized for our use.

One instance of this return through his-

torical criticism to an earlier and simpler worship appears in the following passage concerning the Eucharist, which was written, not as might be imagined by one of our own number, but by these Italian priests, and addressed to the Pope; it may be read as a pleasing surprise by those unfamiliar with their thought.

"So, again, to explain the Eucharistic Mystery, we cannot, for similar reasons, adopt the theory of transubstantiation, unless no one is to understand. But we shall say that the faithful, after the words of consecration, while with the senses of their bodily life they will see only bread and wine, will yet with the soul, by means of a superphenomenal experience—of faith, in short—be in contact with the real and living Christ, who, before he died, gathered his disciples to a fraternal feast to communicate to them for the last time the 'Bread of Eternal Life'—will be in contact with the Christ suspended upon the cross, the Victim of justice and peace."

At this point, in regard to ritualism and forms of worship, where the differences between Protestants and Roman Catholics seem most irreconcilable, they may be found in reality to be most easily removable. For these are differences in forms, not oppositions in the substance of faith. They will tend to disappear as on the one side the Modernists' reform of the worship of the Roman Church prevails, and as on the other side a truer appreciation of the legitimate use of religious symbolism is more generally attained.

The Modernists know the need of a more spiritualized worship, and they would purify the religious symbolism of their Church from uses which are really irreligious. They would retain the ritual in which their most intimate experience of religion has found, and may continue to find, its reverent expression and an ever-present help; but they would use it as symbolism, and prevent the abuse of it as superstition. They themselves are the unsparing critics of legends of

the saints, which are accepted by the blind faith of holy souls; they expose with unhesitating candor the pious fables that gather around sacred relics and their miraculous efficacy; they insist that the Roman Church must throw aside "the heavy baggage" of numerous forms and devotions, which overload faith with superstitions; they would have the worship of the Church so reformed that it may offer a truer symbolism for the support and sustenance of the inner life of believers.

It is not a question whether we can give up all symbolism in religion; the only question is, how can the Church use religious symbolism without abusing it. The symbol is not in itself an evil thing, whether it be a light before an altar, a silver star in the Chapel of the Nativity at Bethlehem, or a statue of Luther kissing the open Bible, or a flower before a pulpit. The efficacy of a symbol may be the same gracious influence whether it descends from the face of a Madonna to some heart in need of the Divine pity,

or if it follows from the word-picture of the mother, which the revivalist is wont to draw. A devout soul may feel the presence of things invisible and ineffable as with the hearing of the ear they are made real in the music or spiritual words of some plain meeting-house; and he may be touched with the same emotions, and find the same hope which enters within the veil, if he should bow with the silent worshippers in some Cathedral chapel. It is never by the symbol, altar, or cross, or sainted face—it is only when the symbol is made an idol, that the truth is betrayed. It is true that the more sensuous and the more numerous the forms and ritual are, the nearer lies the peril of an idolatrous use of symbolism; but the Gospel is a gift to the senses and the imagination, which a sincere faith need not deny. It was the Christ who said, when he was speaking of his Father's kingdom, "Behold the lilies of the field"; and when he would not leave his disciples comfortless, it was He who said, "This is my body"; and the word of the beloved disciple

is not, Keep yourselves from the signs of baptism, the Cross, and the Cup of Communion, but, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

Questions of ritualism, we are saying, therefore—higher, or lower, simple as the motion of an outstretched hand in benediction, or pictorial as those which the ceremonial of a reformed Catholicism may retain—are not necessarily stumbling blocks in the way of Christian fellowship, and they need not remain as a cause of reproach between Christians, who, whether in the more elaborate liturgy of the Temple, or on the mountain of some simpler devotion, would worship the same God in sincerity and in truth.[1]

In social and family circles this greatest religious separation becomes less and less a

[1] Loisy's candid discussion of the historical development of the Catholic Worship indicates how the Modernist's view opens the way for needed adaptations and spiritual reforms in worship.—*The Gospel and the Church*, Sec. VI.

bar to personal intercourse and coöperation. In philanthropies and in the pursuit of civic righteousness Protestants and Catholics are working and fighting together.

Now in this land the fierce strife between Papist and Puritan is to be remembered only to be forgotten with thanksgiving. Rome is no longer in this country a dreaded menace to civil liberty. Democracy has so far entered into the heritage of American Catholicism that here in a free state our swords are beaten into ploughshares and our spears into pruning-hooks. Too much blood of freemen of Roman Catholic descent has been shed on the battlefields of our American Union, and too many priests of the Roman Catholic faith have been seen ministering to the suffering and dying amid the strife by which government of the people by the people has been made the perpetual covenant of this nation with all its citizens; too firmly established in the will of the people are the laws and the liberty of this country, for us to take alarm at any spectre of priestly

domination, or to invoke the spirits of our ancestors to return to fill our ears with their woes against the modern Babylon. Other social and civil dangers lie before us in the near future; but they are anarchic perils alike for the Roman Catholics and for us. Between Protestants and Catholics the hour of truce long since has come. Our charities bear white flags. Our civic reforms draw recruits from both camps. But if one age of persecution, combat, and bloodshed has long passed; if another day of lessening fear and increasing mutuality, more than our forefathers dreamed, is already here; who shall say that a third age of more positive religious comradeship may not draw near? Even at an hour when we may not be looking, the Son of man cometh.

The one point where reconciliation seems most impossible is the claim of the primacy of St. Peter, if that means the spiritual sovereignty of the Pope. So long as Archbishop Ireland deems himself constrained to insist upon that, Professor Briggs, with all his de-

votion to true Catholicism, must remain at that point a Protestant.[1]

Papal absolutism marks a final issue, and that both in doctrine and in practice. But it is no inconsiderable gain that the separative issue is thus narrowed to one main point. Break through that, and the rest of the middle-wall of partition offers no longer an insuperable obstacle. And that point has already been carried by the historians. Historical research has undermined the foundation of it. From either side modern historians have torn down that wall, and are now greeting one another as comrades.[2] It was Melanchthon who once said that the Pope might be acknowledged if he would abdicate his *jus divinum*. Such abdication of a Divine right is now demanded by the

[1] See discussions between them in the *North American Review*, February, April, September, 1907. I would acknowledge my obligation to Professor Briggs for much aid in suggestions and valuable information, more than I can indicate.

[2] See Harnack's appreciation of the agreement of Protestant and Catholic historians. *Opus cit.*, p. 16.

voice of history. Of an absolute supremacy of Peter Jesus did not speak, and early history knows nothing. Mediæval history put the Cæsar's crown upon the Bishop of Rome, and modern history has judged that by its fruits. In this century the demand for the renunciation of Papal sovereignty—this is the hopeful sign—has not broken forth as the thunder of the Reformation from without; after the whirlwind of the Reformation and the earthquake of the dissolving Roman Empire, and the fire of the French Revolution, it is heard now in the still small voice within the heart of the Roman Church. The claim of spiritual absolutism once removed, the remainder of authority in the primacy of the Bishop of Rome would form no insurmountable obstacle in the way of free intercourse, and of working fellowship between the two great bodies of Christians. Such remaining authority of St. Peter's successor, or substitute, limited and restrained by the coordinate authority of the episcopate throughout the world, might be respected by those

who could not subject themselves to it. And with its exercise in grace and truth, this fellowship of believers might become in time as manifest, the ways of coming and going between the reformed Roman Catholics and other churches could be thrown open as wide, and their hospitality become as broad, as already is the case, for the most part, among the Protestant churches.

With regard to differences of belief, Professor Harnack recalls a pertinent and encouraging lesson of history, when he says of the task of setting aside or softening Protestant and Roman confessional divisions: "If one objects to it that at this time no one can imagine how and under what forms Catholicism and Protestantism can ever draw near one another, it is to be remembered that three hundred years ago no one could have conceived beforehand how Lutheranism and Calvinism could have been fused together. And yet we have to-day the Evangelical Union, and thousands know themselves as evangelical Christians without

any suspicion of that opposition which once bade Lutherans and Calvinists contend more bitterly than Lutherans and Catholics."

We may gain further confidence against "the argument of despair" with regard to ultimate reconciliation of religious opinions, if we recall how many are the forgotten controversies of our own history. In faded pamphlets and in books long unread on the shelves of our libraries their records remain unsought and unknown; all the passion of them gone, and only the infrequent reader's amusement at the fierce vehemence of their pages left. Who among us, to mention one instance of many, can recall the musical controversy which once threatened to disrupt many New England churches? The "Anti-psalmists" of those days opposed the introduction of written music and regular singers, as though it were a new invasion of the Roman Antichrist. They clung to what they called "the good old way" of singing without rule and in the spirit. In the general loss of musical knowledge at the close of

the seventeenth century musical barbarism threatened to overrun New England. With a bitter cry it was contended that every man must be free in the church to sing as he pleased, and that the introduction of written music would lead to the use of written prayers, and that would lead to Episcopacy, and that to Popery. But the reformation in Psalm singing, which began about 1720, and which, like most reformations, was accomplished only through persistent efforts against most conscientious scruples, has long since become a forgotten triumph of our inheritance of praise. Through our history a toilsome way of progress in worship may be traced. Our New England Puritanism succeeded in the seventeenth century in gaining freedom of worship; in the eighteenth century it produced some harmony in worship; in the nineteenth it diversified and enriched its worship; from the first to the last it has sought for immediateness and spirituality of worship. These elements our churches may bring as their full historic contribution to the

worship of the one Church, whose liturgy shall be at once simple and beautiful, uniform and diversified, spiritual and free.

The lesson of many forgotten controversies enters into the reasonable hope of future reconciliations which historians like Döllinger have entertained. He was a noble but pathetic figure when he was forced to abandon the Roman fold, and to form with others the Old Catholic Church; when even in his separation, with the light of hope upon his face, he stood, praying for the reunion of the churches. He uttered the belief and the hope in which he desired to live and to die, as he repeated these words which a former Prussian official, who had long been concerned with the ecclesiastical affairs of both Churches, wrote at the end of his public career in 1857: "I am certain the time will come, before the newly inserted stones are mouldered, when a common Te Deum will be sung in the cathedral of Cologne."

Some reunion of Christendom is in itself no more impossible than was the sudden

appearance in history of the Judæo-Christian Church. No one could have foretold that before he saw it. It came as a surprise to Peter in his dream on the housetop; and the realization of that dream in the primitive Universal Church is the wonder of the first age of Christianity in the eyes of modern historians. Yet looking back upon it, we may also see how naturally it came to pass as the fulfilment of the long prophecies of history, and as the immediate manifestation of the Life that was in Christ. So one might drop at this point his discourse on the reasonable hope of Church unity without troubling himself further with difficulties of the imagination concerning the form in which it may hereafter be made visible. We do not know with what body it may come. Nevertheless, many will wish to conceive more definitely in what way the idea of Christian unity may become more visible; and a step or two farther our thought of it may venture to go. Any conception of a possible realization of, or approximation toward, Church

unity which we may imagine, though it may never come to pass in that form, may serve as an aid to our faith in it, and an incentive to our endeavor for it.

One such suggestion concerning a Universal Church may be derived from the political process through which Internationalism is taking form and substance. This is the more suggestive inasmuch as Internationalism is alike the dream of the working classes and an ideal of the statesman, although in quite different ways. A federation of industrial interests throughout the world, and a peaceful reign of international law, are now much advocated. These ideas have entered as a social ferment into the politics of the world in this century. They will take more tangible form, though exactly how, it might be difficult to predict. But shall Internationalism come on apace in the world, and Catholicism tarry in the Church? Cosmopolitanism prepares the way for a true Catholicism.

Now, for the practical power of a united

civilization in its industries and in the maintenance of the peace of the world, no centralized sovereignty is thought of as necessary or possible; it is not another Cæsarism that is about to come. The existence and efficiency of Internationalism is to be secured and made apparent by compacts, conventions, representative courts; and by the breaking down, or at least the opening of doors through tariff walls. International law, although it is at present largely unformulated, is a felt presence on every sea, and a protection of all nations in every port. The analogy is sufficiently striking to indicate how the formless Church, behind and working through all Christian communities, may find means and organs of making itself a felt factor and a representative authority throughout the whole religious world. The forerunner of a world's peaceful commerce and industry calls to the churches to repent of their strife.

If we are asked to give greater definiteness to the idea of a possible organic oneness of

the churches, another biological illustration may further answer this end. Only in the existing inchoate state of Christianity we shall have to draw the illustration from the earlier forms of organic life, and not from the highest. For some time to come it may be only the rudimentary forms of Christian unity and coöperation that may succeed in the struggle of ecclesiastical competitions. Biologists observe at an early stage of development, following the primitive state of isolated individual cells, a form known as colonial life. The units are still single cells, but they are now grouped together as a common cell-aggregate. Sometimes they are to be seen hanging together in a line of mutual dependence—a linear-aggregate; sometimes they are held together in a globular mass within a common gelatinous envelope. They begin to take on different functions as the process of cell combination goes on, and they become in still higher forms more and more mutually dependent and helpful. So life brings its elementary units first into looser

connections, easily broken, and then into more differentiated parts and coöperative functions for the nutriment and preservation of the whole. So naturally and spontaneously Christianity began its life in the world; and so it must begin again the formation of the Church as one whole. Our illustration may be pressed only so far as it renders it easier to see that from beginnings of perhaps tentative and loosely bound aggregates of churches, firmer and more serviceable organic connections may develop and interlace themselves. A working dependence may grow of itself into a better ordered unity. The final and perfect form of it, at the end of the long ascent of Christian life, shall be what the great-minded Apostle foresaw at the beginning—the full-grown man who has attained unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ—His Church—the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

The beginnings of this perfect Church are within our reach, although the consummation of it transcends our conception. But the hope

is no hallucination, the near end of which may be grasped. Some practical possibilities of renovation in the Roman Church have been suggested. It has been said that a modernized Pope may be sometime elected; but that, though possible, does not seem to be an immediate probability. It is more promising to reflect that the coming power lies more and more with the people, and that the Pope has good reason for his apprehension of the part which the laity are destined to play in the progress of the Church. Sooner or later their insistence on the limitations of the authority of the Vatican will have to be regarded. Constitutional government is wrought into the faith of the people. The Church cannot long survive as an exception. The demand for "a constitutionalized Papacy" Rome cannot resist and outlive. The outcry of the Modernists has a double imperativeness; it is an appeal to history, and a rallying call for an advance. The Roman hierarchy is a massive fact; but forces are mightier than facts.

Another General Council has been spoken of in some quarters. When the time for it shall have fully come, the leaven of the modern learning will have so far pervaded the whole lump that Ultramontanism may no longer sift its wholesome working out of the loaf. A General Council, regaining the voice of reason and conscience, would prove an immensely reformatory power in Roman Catholicism.

Moreover, if—as Professor Briggs has what may seem the hardy optimism to suggest—the result of another General Council in which Modernism has gained influence, should lead as the next logical step to conference in any direction with representative Protestants, an unmistakable advance would thereby have been taken toward the reunion of Christendom. But this issue lies just at present beneath our horizon. It may appear to-morrow or some other day. This is not the first time that such a proposition, which perhaps to most may seem visionary, has been made. In the seventeenth century

efforts for reunion of the Reformed and Roman churches were seriously made, and considerable correspondence for that end was carried on. At that time Moranus and Leibnitz urged that controverted points be compared at a new Council to be composed of Catholics and Protestants in common. These efforts, encouraged by some concessions at one time by Pope Innocent XI. after continuing for some thirty years, proved fruitless. Political reasons and memories of persecutions, which at that time rendered the world unready for them, do not exist at the present time.[1]

Concerning many points of dogma which are divisive, a really Ecumenical Council might in our time be ready to accept the wisdom of Erasmus' words, which fell unheeded in his day of gathering storm: "Our present problems are said to be waiting for the next Ecumenical Council. Better let them wait

[1] For an account of that irenic movement, and its failure, see Döllinger, *Lectures on the Reunion of the Churches*, p. 83 *sq.*

until the veil is removed, and we see God face to face."

Voices of peace which were hushed in the tempest of the early hours of the Reformation, and unheeded in the later moments of lull in the storm (voices of Melanchthon, Erasmus and his friends, like Wicelius, a moderate Catholic, who were saying, "We will listen to Erasmus, to those who love Christianity better than they love a faction,"—of Sir Thomas More, and John von Staupitz, Luther's teacher, and Cassander, Bossuet, Spinola, Molanus, Leibnitz, and Grotius, and other irenic spirits), may be heard again in these evening hours, now that the shouts of the warriors have ceased, and the world's harvest waits for the reapers' sickles.

It would exceed the scope of this essay to attempt to divide among the several churches the responsibilities for the continued divisions of Christendom, or to measure the part of any one of them in the obligation of this

present irenic movement. Encased in denominational customs, isolated in impervious dogmas, withdrawn in Churchly pride, or shut up in a narrow cell of private devotions, this sect or another may delay to welcome the dawn of the rising Catholicism. But we may be assured that the "wonder-working providence of God," as our New England forefathers saw it and called it, will not suffer too long any body of Christians to thrust aside the supreme obligation of the Universal Church which is bound up in the Lord's commission to his followers to make disciples of all nations. And his beatitude is given, not to the peaceable, but to the makers of peace.

Well may all denominations of Protestants take to heart these words which many years ago a peacemaker in the Roman Catholic Church, the profound and devout historian and theologian, Möhler, wrote in his "Symbolism:" "Both communions should stretch out a friendly hand to one another in the consciousness of a common guilt. This

open confession of guilt on both sides will be followed by the festival of reconciliation."

The common obligation of reconciliation cannot be measured by the mere word, tolerance. Tolerance may mark the achievement of the past age; it is not a great enough word to signify the duty of the twentieth century. For this coming age the very word tolerance, as Harnack says, should be deemed "a proud and hateful word." The full measure of our obligation of Catholicity is—Love.

To prepare the way for the coming of the kingdom in which all the prophets of the "Holy Church throughout all the world" shall be fulfilled, each and every Church has need to rise to the nobleness of the Baptist who could say of Him who was to come after him, "He must increase, but I must decrease." At a moment when John the Baptist was at the height of his power, in the midst of his success, in a place of his baptizing where there were many waters, when his own disciples brought to him tid-

ings that He who was with him beyond Jordan, was baptizing; this man, so strong and self-contained, who had all Jerusalem at his feet, was noble enough to say, as one speaking to himself, and with a new glory in his soul, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Such is the superb nobleness required of all the churches at this epoch-making hour. The Christianity that now is, must give its baptism to the Christianity that is to be. Roman Catholicism shall be humbled to the dust if it confesses not, "There cometh after me he that is mightier than I." Protestantism shall fail, and be scattered to the winds, if it denies before the coming One, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

Such is the judgment which Modernism brings to the Papacy—for its reformation or its doom. Such, likewise, is the article of the standing or the falling church which the providence of God presses upon the acceptance of the Protestant communions. In this larger, nobler loyalty all our lesser loyalties

may be taken up. From the baptism of this Spirit may proceed—perhaps sooner than men may think or dream—the age of the One Holy Catholic Church. And if the age of Protestantism which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is with glory.

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